

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL  
EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SELECTED MINORITY LANGUAGE AREAS IN  
SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA**

by

**MESFIN DERASH ZEME**

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## DECLARATION

Name: Mesfin Derash Zeme

Student number: 57633657

Degree: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL STUDIES

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL  
EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SELECTED MINORITY LANGUAGE  
AREAS IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

.



Date

Mesfin Derash Zeme

11 April 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) has become an important concept in the field of primary education in many parts of the world. MTB MLE is a form of education that deals with the bridging of learning in the mother tongue to using one or more languages as languages of instruction in schools.

This study took place in the Southern Nation and Nationality Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia (SNNPRS) to investigate the implementation challenges faced by two sample minority languages, namely Dawuro and Kontaatho, that use the mother tongue as both medium of instruction and as a subject in primary schools. The study focused on the drawbacks that hindered the proper implementation of the education and training policy regarding mother-tongue education in minority language areas.

To conduct the study, the qualitative research method was employed. Representatives from the Ministry of Education, Colleges of Teacher Education, primary school directors and teachers of mother tongue as a subject and as a medium of instruction, parents and relevant community representatives took part.

From the Ministry of Education, two experts from the Curriculum Design and Implementation Directorate and two participants from Mother tongue and English Language development directorate were purposively invited to participate in individual interviews. Similarly, three instructors from one of the Colleges of Teacher Education and 32 mother-tongue teachers drawn from eight schools of the target area were also individually interviewed. In addition, three heterogenous focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholders comprising community and parents' representatives, schoolteachers' representative, students' representatives and school directors.

The study was based on the social constructivist and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theoretical assumptions. The findings of the study indicated that MTB MLE is not being successfully implemented in the minority language areas in the SNNPRS because of the deficits in awareness raising, proper teacher training, readiness of the languages in relation to orthography and scientific terminology to be used as medium of instruction, availability and quality of teaching and learning materials, standardised orthography, availability of guidelines and a strategy to carry

out the MTB MLE programme, support and follow up of the implementation of the MTB MLE programme.

**Key Words:** Mother-Tongue-Based-Multilingual Education (MTB MLE), minority languages, mother tongue (LI), transfer, transition, qualitative research, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, BICS and CALP, constructivism, language policy, language planning.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADL	Actual Developmental Level
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CRTI	Curve, Triangle and Rectangle Institute
CTE	College of Teacher Education
EFA	Education for All
EFDR	Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Programme
HPE	Health and Physical Education
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEP	Ministry of Education Participants
MKO	More Knowledgeable Others
MoE	Ministry of Education
Mol	Medium of Instruction
MTB MLE	Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education
MTE	Mother-tongue education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PDL	Potential Developmental Level
PTSA	Parent, Teacher, Students Association
SNNPRS	Southern Nation and Nationality Peoples' Regional State
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TTI	Teacher Training Institution
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISA	University of South Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WGAGODA	Wolyittata, Gamo, Gofa, Dawuro (mixture of languages)
ZPD	Zone Proximal Development

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this study, the role and the implementation of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) in selected minority language areas of Ethiopia is explored with specific reference to the minority languages in Southern Ethiopia region. Primary schools at the level of Grades 1–4 are the focus of the study. The purpose of the study is to explore the challenges faced with MTB MLE in order to inform policy makers and implementers about the existing gaps and difficulties in the implementation of the policy. To that end, this chapter presents the background, the objectives, the research questions, the statement of the problem and the theoretical framework.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Multilingualism is an asset for the development of a nation. As one of the major factors to enhance the developmental needs of a society, multilingual education should therefore be given a prominent place in the sociopolitical arena of a country (Ouane & Glanz, 2010:8).

All countries of the world are both multilingual and multicultural. There are no countries which are not multilingual and various languages are spread across border in a range of different constellations (Ouane & Glanz, 2010:6). In the same vein, Van der Walt (2013:4) states that there are more multilingual individuals in the world than monolingual persons. The existence of varieties of languages within a country and the recognition of these languages not only to survive but also to play a role in development is crucial. However, to some, multilingualism is seen as more of a threat than an opportunity. This perception emanates from the predominant European concept of nation building as one country, one culture, and one language. To that end, the authoritarian politics of culture and linguistics assimilation and ‘divide-and-rule’ have been experienced worldwide (Ouane & Glanz, 2010:15). Unlike some countries that promote this negative perception

of multilingualism, Ethiopia promotes access, equity, relevance and quality of indigenous languages in all dimensions of development including education.

The education and training policy of Ethiopia as part of the maintenance and revitalisation of local languages and concomitant development programme has provided an opportunity for all indigenous languages to be used as school languages at primary school level. This policy has been praised by many scholars and researchers as a positive policy compared to other African countries. "Ethiopia has a particular interesting and instructive history of language education, one which offers some extremely positive examples along with other less positive multilingual countries" (Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Mekonnen, 2007:9).

In Ethiopia, the importance of mother-tongue education had never been given much emphasis as it is done currently. Before 1994, only the Amharic and English languages were taught in schools both as a subject and as a medium of instruction (MoI) in primary and junior secondary schools. This current language policy underlines the necessity and importance of having proper preparation on the side of the community, relevant individuals and organisations in the various communities to use MTB MLE in their respective areas (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1994:23). It seems, however, that many ethnic groups are keen to have their indigenous languages receive equal status as languages that are taught in schools. To that end, this research focuses on whether the necessary preparation has been done to prepare teachers, schools and communities in some of the minority language areas for the implementation of MTB MLE. In other words, I plan to investigate the actual preparations made before the languages are ready to be used in the schools. Preparation regarding the development of the languages, the training of teachers, the attitude of the community and the implementation procedure will be investigated.

Despite the progressive policy of mother-tongue education in Ethiopia, there has been a lower level of achievement of children in reading in their own language than expected. "A significant percentage of children in Grade 2 read zero words correctly ... such large proportions of children remained completely illiterate in their mother tongue" (USAID, 2010:ES3). According to the Ethiopia Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Report

(USAID, 2010:ES8), it seems that the implementation of mother-tongue education has not been as successful as hoped in Ethiopia. There could be many reasons for the unsuccessful results of the programme. Accordingly, the current study investigates the challenges that have hindered the successful implementation of the programme in minority language areas.

A document released by the Multilingual Education Network of East Africa indicates that an MTB MLE programme should address four major perspectives to be successful in its implementation: pedagogical, linguistics, institutional and sociopolitical perspectives (Kioko, Mutiga, Trudell, Schroeder & Inyega, 2010:3). Among these, the pedagogical perspective is the one that considers the ease of learning and the design of the curriculum. The curriculum should specifically be built for a multilingual classroom environment and teachers should be properly trained to run multilingual classrooms. In addition, the pedagogical perspective emphasises reading acquisition since reading and writing are essential skills for school achievement. Similarly, the linguistic perspective deals with the capacity of all languages to be developed, to grow and to serve the function assigned to them. The institutional and policy perspective is about the implication of multilingualism for policy and institutional significance.

It is clear that currently, multilingualism in education is a worldwide phenomenon. As one of the multilingual nations of the world, Ethiopia is striving to address the issue of multilingual education or MTB MLE so that the language of instruction will not be a barrier for children of various language communities but that their languages spoken at home will be an asset in the school situation. In this study, I will, therefore, investigate the challenges related to the pedagogical skills of the teachers, the status of the language to be used as in teaching and the outlook and readiness of two communities for mother-tongue education. The two communities are part of the Southern Nations Nationalities People's Regional State (SNNPR) and Kontaatho and Dawuro languages are their mother tongue.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Pinnock (2009:10) explains that in many countries of Africa, policies for MTB MLE have been adopted but effective implementation is lacking. This weakness in implementation in many African countries has been confirmed by Heugh et al. (2007:18-20). These authors point out that the policy and the implementation strategies do not usually match, and the expected outcomes are thus not achieved.

Despite the importance and essentiality of mother-tongue education at least at primary school level, there are a number of problems and limitations regarding implementation that hinder the success and need to be properly addressed before the languages can be used as languages of education, such as the inadequacy of the vocabulary, the lack of a well-developed writing system or the lack of a standard orthography, a shortage of well-developed teaching and learning materials, and a shortage of well-trained mother-tongue teachers particularly for the mother tongue as an MoL.

Since 1994, the new Ethiopian education and training policy has been in place, and the MoE of Ethiopia and other relevant government institutions are striving to implement MTB MLE in various regions of the country. However, the procedure to implement this throughout the country is a huge task and it has therefore been difficult to achieve the intended goal. Among the challenges are a lack of appropriate planning, guidelines and directives. The attitude and the level of understanding of the pedagogical advantage of the programme on the side of the implementers and the actual practitioners who are the teachers is another major challenge. The role of Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) in providing well-trained mother-tongue teachers is also among the major implementational challenges.

According to Heugh et al. (2007:25), everywhere in the world, better academic achievement of children who study efficiently in their mother tongue in reading and writing, in understanding mathematical concepts and in developing high levels of competency as opposed to those who do not study in their mother tongue, has been proven.

In Ethiopia, currently, MTB MLE is being offered in more than 50 local languages. However, the results of an assessment conducted at different times by different international and local organisations collaboratively with the Ethiopian MoE show that children in Ethiopia who are taught in their mother tongue are unable to read in their mother tongue or are not satisfactorily reading in their mother tongue (USAID, 2010, 2014). Studies have been done on languages that have been relatively well-established regarding orthographic development, material preparation, teacher training and other educational input and facilities. Among these are studies about Amharic and Tigrigna, languages that have had their own well-developed scripts for more than a century and are languages in which many books have been written and used in the school system. The other languages on which studies have been done are Afaan Oromo and Sidama Afo. These are also languages that have a developed writing system. Though the studies mentioned above included some languages that have introduced recently, the results obtained have been worse than expected. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) Action plan (MoE, 2016:17) points out that 34% of children in Grade 2 were unable to read a single word and 48% of the children were unable to answer a single question on a reading comprehension test.

Thus, it is planned that the current research will explore the administrative, procedural, and implementation challenges that hinder the children's achievements with a special focus on two minority language areas.

Though the gap identified by the EGRA has been addressed and some remedial action such as a review of the curriculum and improvement of teacher training has been undertaken, there are several challenges that need to be addressed if MTB MLE is to be successful. The challenges in the use of minority languages as an MoI extend beyond what the EGRA study covered. Thus, the research in the current study investigates the challenges of using MTB MLE in two of the minority languages. I plan to explore the challenges facing MTB MLE by doing an in-depth study in two specific minority language areas.



#### **1.4 THE RESEARCHER'S PROFILE AND MOTIVATION TO CONDUCT THIS STUDY**

As someone who has worked in the education arena for many years and as an expert in language teaching and learning, I have been inspired by and confronted with this agenda of languages in education. At the age of 25, I began teaching Amharic, the lingua franca of the country, and English in primary schools and at secondary school level. During this time, I was able to observe the problems of children learning in Amharic in cases where Amharic was their second language, as well as learning English as a foreign language which is also a Mol at the higher levels of education beginning from junior secondary school. I have always asked myself why local indigenous languages were not used for the purpose of education, at least at primary school level. If indigenous languages were used, children should not struggle with understanding the language and the subject content that is taught and could therefore grasp the concepts of the lessons because they would be taught in a language they understand. Moreover, when I was working as a curriculum expert in the MoE, this thought of mother-tongue education remained with me. My question was not answered until it later became a hotly debated issue in the country when the 1994 education and training policy proclamation was out and put in place.

The findings of a 2006 study on the use of the Mol that was conducted at national level on the implementation of the MoE policy, indicated that changes were needed in the Mol used in Ethiopian primary schools (Heugh et al., 2007:113–114). The study recommended changing the use of English as an Mol to mother tongue at least in both the first cycle and second cycle primary schools, namely, Grades 1–8. The study showed that not only the children but also most teachers were unable to learn and teach effectively in English. Since then the recommendations of the findings have been implemented. Because of this, I was inspired to advocate and promote the use of mother-tongue education in the country at the primary school level.

Though the policy of mother-tongue education in the country has been in existence for many years, the implementation and the achievement of children still has many drawbacks. To that end, I have been motivated to determine some principles to guide MTB MLE in general and particularly for the minority language areas. These principles

should, however, be based on well-designed research and data analysis, which can be used as a guiding principle for specific minority language areas in the country.

Thus, the major concern of this study was to look into the attitudes, pedagogical understanding and the implementation of MTB MLE by conducting interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with MoE directorate experts, teachers, teacher educators, students and representatives of the respective language communities of selected schools in the districts of the SNNPRS. In doing this, two minority language groups, namely, the Dawuro language group and the Kontta language group, were selected as the target groups for this study since they represent the minority language speakers of a regional state, namely the SNNPRS.

In general, the purpose of this study was to explore the challenges that hinder the implementation of MTB MLE in minority language areas with the aim of recommending possible alternatives for effective implementation of the policy. It was also envisaged that the findings could help policy makers and curriculum experts at the national and regional levels in drafting proper MTB MLE principles and procedures.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question is:

What are the major challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in primary schools in the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) in Ethiopia?

To investigate this question several sub-questions were researched as follows:

- How do the community at large and, other stakeholders perceive children's learning in mother tongue at primary school level?
- How are the mother-tongue education policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?
- How are models and principles of successful MTB MLE being applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia?

- To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as language of instruction?
- What follow-up, support and monitoring strategy are in place?

## **1.6 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The major aim of this study is to identify the challenges that hindered children's MTB MLE in primary schools in general and in minority language areas in the SNNPRS of Ethiopia in particular.

## **1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are the following:

- To investigate, identify and analyse the perceptions and understandings of stakeholders such as mother-tongue teachers, teacher educators, MoE experts, community members and the parents regarding MTB MLE in primary schools in minority language areas.
- To explore whether the principles and components of mother-tongue education are being applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia.
- To explore the MTB MLE challenges faced by minority language groups in the SNNPRS of Ethiopia.
- To assess whether the mother-tongue education is being implemented according to the education and training policy.
- To assess the extent of the support and follow-up provided to strengthen the MTB MLE.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this study should emanate from various important aspects. Firstly, although the Ethiopian mother-tongue education programme began several years ago, according to research findings done by MoE and some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) it has not been as successful as expected (MoE, 2016; USAID, 2010). Academic research studies have been done on different aspects of MLE in the

country: Terefe (2010) focused on the policy implementation of Oromiya Regional State with particular emphasis on Afaan Oromo Language; Jotte (2012) investigated the contribution of mother-tongue education to promote indigenous knowledge in Oromiya region; Girma (2002) focused on the right to education in mother tongue; while Alemu (2005) looked in to the socio-cultural and pedagogical implications of multilingualism.

As far as my reading of these studies is concerned, none of them investigated the perceptions, views and opinions of all stakeholders or the attitudinal challenges in the implementation of MTB MLE in general and that of the minority languages in particular. Thus, my study investigates the challenges that have hindered the achievement of MTB MLE, seeking to provide better methods and alternatives of handling the mother-tongue education programme in the country with special emphasis on the minority language areas. This was based on the universal scientific principles, plans and procedures that would make the programme more effective. There were some community members including politicians and the elites who doubted the possible contribution of mother-tongue education towards children's academic achievement. Indeed, "the strength of pedagogical arguments in favour of using mother tongue in primary education has not been adequate to satisfy the critics of the policy in Ethiopia" (Cohen, 2007:82). Therefore, it is hoped that this study will show the benefits of mother-tongue education for children's quality of education. The study will also highlight the drawbacks observed in implementing mother-tongue education in the country in general and derive principles and procedures that will encourage the policy makers to improve and amend the mother-tongue education programme in the country. According to Malone (2010:6), a plan for an MTB MLE programme needs to be flexible.

Therefore, I envisage designing a possible framework to guide policy makers, teachers and community members to help children to make a success of their studies when they are taught in their mother tongue at primary school level.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Research of this kind, whether it takes a deductive or an inductive approach, should fall within one of the major research paradigms: qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods

approach. Because this particular research deals with a field of social science which is mainly aligned with the social and political realities and knowledge gained through them, a qualitative approach will be used. According to Braun and Clarke (2013:21), the purpose of any qualitative research is to explore, describe, understand or explain a phenomenon. In line with this, the intention of this research is mainly to explore, interpret and describe how and what has been done in the past few years regarding MTB MLE and to identify the challenges encountered. Qualitative research is also about the what, how and why of something (ibid.). By the same token, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:2) state that qualitative research aims to elicit the contextualised nature of experience and action and attempts to come up with an analysis that is 'thick' and integrative. In this study, qualitative research will be used to look into the multilingual education experiences, views and perceptions of various social groups and the challenges that are encountered in selected minority language contexts of Ethiopia. I plan to do an in-depth investigation of the MTB MLE scenario and what drawbacks have been encountered in selected minority language areas. This research will also make use of an inductive approach by looking first into the Ethiopian MTB MLE and training policy and directives in general and then to see how it has been implemented in terms of the needs of minority language area primary schools in particular.

#### **1.10 SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

The sampling technique employed in this study will be purposive sampling, a non-probability technique which is a typical approach in qualitative research. In purposive sampling, participants are selected on the basis that they provide adequate information to be analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2013:56). Though there are no rules in qualitative data for a sample size, a sample size of between 15 and 30 individual interviews is common (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young, 2018:4).

It is planned to select 39 individual interview respondents, three heterogeneous focus group discussions (FGDs) comprising participants from parents, representatives of teachers, representative of students, school administrators and community leaders were held. The sample will comprise 32 mother-tongue teachers from eight schools of the two sample areas; four experts of the MoE; and three teacher educators from a College of

Teacher Education (CTE) where mother-tongue teachers of the selected minority language areas are trained will be interviewed. Participants for FGDs will be selected from parents, community members, teacher representatives, student representatives and primary school directors of the sample schools. It was planned to conduct three FGDs. An FGD in qualitative research aims at describing and understanding perceptions, interpretation and beliefs of selected groups to gain understanding. Both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping have their own advantages and disadvantages. I preferred to conduct a heterogeneous focus group discussion and agrees with what Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:76) say about heterogeneous group composition. According to them, heterogeneous group composition is better if researchers want to maximise the possibility of exploring subjects from different perspectives. In this research, directors, teachers, parents and community representatives will take part in the FGDs in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the language situation at school.

The study will examine the challenges of MTB MLE by taking a sample of two minority language areas in the SNNPRS with a special focus on eight primary schools where the two language groups, namely, Dawuro and Kontta are predominant.

### **1.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

This study will use social constructivism as a theoretical paradigm (MacBlain, 2018:59) as well as the Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) theory (Vygotsky, 1978:86). Both theories are relevant to this particular study because the study deals with the implementation of mother tongue through which children could make use of their experience in learning their lessons relating to the environment and culture they live in. The study will also explore the contribution and input of the teachers, the community members and relevant stakeholders as well as the public at large. Similarly, Vygotsky's ZPD which focuses on involvement of parents, the community, schools and peer groups in children's cognitive development is pertinent to the study. Thus, these two theories were used as the theoretical frameworks of the study.

## 1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics as the governing rule of any research will be given due emphasis in this study. In this regard the major principles associated with ethical conduct during research will be taken cognition of. These principles according to Ryen (2016:42–43) are:

- do no harm, a principle related to safeguarding the participants, privacy and anonymity, confidentiality,
- informed consent,
- truthfulness and accuracy,
- rapport and friendship, and
- intrusiveness.

All these principles will be adhered to. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee in the College of Education at UNISA (Appendix A).

## 1.13 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

**Additive Bi/ Multilingualism:** this model is similar to the late-exit transition in such a way that both involve the delay of transition from mother tongue to another official/ foreign language or it takes mother tongue as an Mol throughout the school years with the official language/ foreign languages taught as a subject (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11; Weber, 2014:2-3).

**Bilingual or multilingual education:** the use of two or more languages for instruction purposes in school and for attaining literacy (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012:2)

**Constructivism:** a theory that asserts that learning is an activity that is individual to the learner. It is an approach to teaching and learning based on the premise that cognition is the result of mental construction (Bada & Olusegun, 2015:66).

**Early-exit transition:** this language model targets the fluency in a single target official/ foreign language. The transition from mother tongue to the official/ foreign language is quicker within one to four years (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11)

**Language Policy:** a deliberate effort to affect the structure, function, and acquisition of languages (Tollefson, 2008:68).

**Language-in-Education:** legislation on and practices pertaining to the uses of languages as a Mol and language of literacy in education.

**Late-exit transition:** a delay of transition from mother tongue as a Mol to a different target language. It means the use of the mother tongue five to six years before introducing a new language (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11)

**Medium of instruction:** the main language used to conduct most or all teaching and learning activities in education (Pinnock et al., 2011:5)

**Minority language/ non-dominant language:** language spoken by people who are fewer in number or less prestigious in terms of power than predominant group in the same country or nation.

**Mother Tongue:** the language used constantly from birth to interact and communicate with a child by their caregiver, family, friends and community (Pinnock, Mackenzie, Pearce & Young, 2011:5). “The language which a person has acquired in early years and which normally has become his natural instrument of thought and communication” (Ball, 2011:12; UNESCO 1995, cited in Hornberger, 2008:138). This is sometimes referred to as the child’s first language (abbreviated as L1).

**Mother-Tongue Instruction:** Mother-tongue instruction generally refers to the use of the learners’ mother tongue in teaching (Ouane & Glanz: 2011:13).

**Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education:** learner-centred basic education which starts in mother tongue and gradually introduces one or more other languages in a structured manner linked to children’s existing understanding of their first language or mother tongue (Pinnock et al., 2011:5).

**Social Constructivism:** emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding. It is a theoretical notion which stipulates that knowledge living in the



mind of individual depends on what they know from their experience. (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:29).

**Subtractive Bi/ Multilingualism:** this model involves moving learners from the mother tongue to the official/ foreign language as early as possible. The model sometimes uses the official language as Mol rather than the mother tongue (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:11).

**Transfer:** a cognitive process where whatever is known in the first language including knowledge of the language and academic concepts is transferred to the second language (Heugh, 2011:136).

**Transition:** the move from mother tongue Mol to an official / foreign language (Heugh, 2011:136).

#### **1.14 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

It was originally planned that the thesis would consist of five chapters, but on advice from my supervisor, Chapter 1 was separated into two chapters. The final study thus consists of six chapters as described below.

Chapter 1 contains the introductory part of the study followed by the background and the statement of the problem which deals with the major problem of MTB MLE in Ethiopia in general and in the minority language areas in particular. The research questions, the objectives, as well as aims of the study are addressed. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are also briefly discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2 discusses the historical background of traditional and modern education in Ethiopia with reference to language education.

Chapter 3 presents a review of literature in which issues underpinning the importance of MTB MLE and its proper implementation are explained. It is in this chapter that I looked into various studies done in different parts of the world and in Ethiopia. In this chapter, the opinions of academics in the field of language-in-education are presented. The notion of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and majority and minority languages are discussed. Issues related to language planning, language policy, education and training

policy, curriculum and mother-tongue teachers' training in connection to the context in Ethiopia form part of this chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design, the method and methodology of the study, the sampling procedure and the instruments used in data collection. The last part of this chapter discusses the data analysis approach.

Chapter 5 presents the data and deals with the analysis of data as well as the interpretation of the findings.

Chapter 6 is the last chapter that contains the summary and the overall findings arising from the research. The conclusions and the recommendations of the study are contained in this chapter.

## **1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

As can be observed from this chapter, the general aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of MTB MLE in selected minority language areas of the southern regional state in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the chapter explained the overall nature of the study and the methodology used. The theoretical and philosophical stance of the study was also presented. The chapter explained the statement of the problem and the significance of the study.

In the next chapter, the focus will be on the historical background of education in Ethiopia in relation to the medium of instruction used over the years since modern education began. It also describes the region and the selected sample minority language areas of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **A GLANCE AT THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA WITH REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

It goes without saying that education is one of the major means of enhancing the social and economic development of a country in the modern world. Thus, it is regarded as one of the major concerns of any political system in all countries of the world. Every form of government in a given country has a vital interest in educating its people since education plays a decisive role in all aspects of socio-economic, religious or political change and stability. Several scholars have explained its role in terms of creating and disseminating knowledge, values, culture and many other aspects of human life.

Djité (2008:53) states that education plays a role in promoting the freedom of individuals as well as being a key driver of development. He further explains the decisive role local languages play in education achieving such development. Many local and international studies have indicated the positive relationship between education and sustainable development (Hogan & Torney, 2008:5; UNESCO, 2005:6; UNESCO, 2014b:1). Obviously, education enables all human beings in general and the younger generation in particular to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be productive citizens. As a result, education plays a crucial role in a country that endeavours to engage itself in economic, social and political development in the ever-changing global world (Rieckmann, 2018:34).

In poor countries like Ethiopia, education is the most important means of strengthening and speeding up socio-economic development (Negash, 2010:9). Though they are crucial and play a major role in economic development, strategic investments alone are not sufficient to bring about economic growth and social change. In addition to various sector development plans, linguistic and cultural plurality should be also recognised as a resource that contributes towards the overall development of a country. This is why the use of indigenous languages in the education arena was considered in the Millennium Development Goals under Universal Primary Education for all children by

2015 (Ouane & Glanz, 2011:51). On this particular issue, Alemayhu (2012:3) notes that many people perceive development as an increase in capital or high productivity with the goal of modernising a society through western ideas and thoughts. In this regard, the internal social, political, cultural and linguistic contributions of society have not been given due consideration, based on the assumption that all problems facing a society can be solved by modernisation. However, since 1970, this perception and concept of development has been challenged and questioned repeatedly until the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies was made at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies in 1982. To that end, it was agreed that development goes beyond economic gains and working towards economic goals only (UNESCO, 1982). Hornberger (2008:136) states, in this regard: “Vernacular or indigenous languages are vital in carrying wealth of knowledge as well as being the storehouse of tradition, history and arts of a particular community”.

Ethiopia is one of the countries that struggles to fit into the wider developmental movement of the world. Ethiopia has been struggling to educate and train her citizens who will take responsibility for the future economic, social and political development of the country. To achieve this goal, the country has given more emphasis to equity, access to and quality of education.

Almost all African countries are multilingual, and multilingualism is more normal in Africa than being able to speak only one language (Van Ginkel, 2008:69). As a multilingual and multicultural society, Ethiopia faces the struggle of incorporating multilingualism into its educational system. The notion of multilingual education is problematic in terms of which language to use for successful educational achievement of children in countries that have a multilingual and multicultural context. This affects decisions on how the curriculum should be designed. Within this reality, Ethiopia has gone a long way to designing an appropriate education policy and plan with a reasonable strategy for implementation despite the fact that there are considerable problems in this regard.

## 2.2 GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION AND LANGUAGE GROUPS AND TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is located in East Africa bordering Sudan in the west, Kenya in the south, Somalia in the southeast, Djibouti in the east and Eritrea (previously part of Ethiopia) in the north. Ethiopia is also known as the Horn of Africa because of its geographical location on the map of the continent being horn-shaped. History tells us that Ethiopia was considered as a centre of civilisation in the world (Henze, 2000:30). Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa (Malar, 2009:1). Currently, since 1991, Ethiopia is structured into nine Federal Regional States and two city councils namely: Afar, Amhara, Benshangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Oromiya, Somali, Sothern Nation Nationalities Peoples Region and Tigraye Regional Sates as well as Addis Ababa and Diredawa City Administration as shown in Figure 2.1.

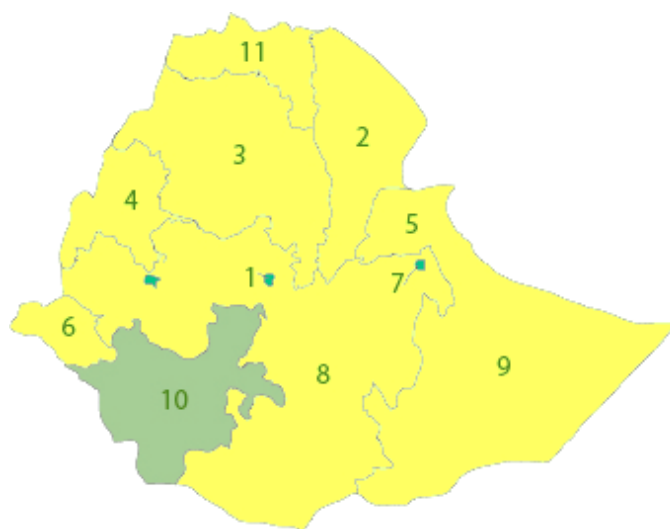


Figure 2.1: Map of Ethiopia

Source: (Adapted from Terefe, 2010:50)

### Key

- |                                    |                                  |   |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Addis Ababa city administration | 5. Dire Dawa City Administration | 9. Somali   |
| 2. Afar                            | 6. Gambella                      | 10. Southern Nation, Nationalities Peoples' Region (SNNPRS) |
| 3. Amara                           | 7. Harari                        | 11. Tigray  |
| 4. Benshangul-Gumuz                | 8. Oromiya                       |   |

Like any other African country, Ethiopia has diversified ethnic societies that have their own indigenous languages and cultures. Ethiopian society comprises the following language groups: Omotic, Cushitic, Semitic and Nilo Sahara. The first three of these language families belong to a common parent language linguistically known as Proto-Afro-Asiatic. These different language families are scattered in all nine regional states and the two city administrations. Among these regional states the Southern Nations and Nationalities People's Region (SNNPR) has the biggest number of indigenous languages. In this regional state, there are 56 different minority ethnolinguistic groups. Most of these languages were used as oral language only until the 1995 when the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic constitution came into existence. The research that is planned for this study was conducted in the SNNPR.

Among the languages of Ethiopia, Amharic played a dominant role in the country's administrative and political arena for centuries before the new constitution was promulgated. Amharic which is a native language of the central and northern inhabitants has been the national official language of the country since the country became independent in 1935, having previously been a colony of Italy. Cohen (2005:78) emphasises the dominance of Amharic in the linguistic profile of the Ethiopian state as a consequence of both the official and the unofficial extension of its use. He further states that it was the only Ethiopian language used in an official capacity until very recently: no other language group had this status for more than a century. The Amharic language was the accepted language of the imperial court under the leadership of King Tewodros II in 1855, and replaced Ge'ez, another Semitic language, which was a language of the nobility, the church and the traditional elite since the Orthodox Church was established in Ethiopia in the 4th century AD.

### **2.3 THE FOUNDATION OF MODERN EDUCATION WITH REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA**

The foundation of traditional education in Ethiopia dates back to the time of the introduction of the Orthodox Christian religion in the country. Historians agree that the emergence of a traditional system of education began in the 4th century AD of the

Axumite Empire. Like many other countries of the world, the traditional education in Ethiopia provided its contemporary generation with the cultural facts and social value of the society including morality, religion and philosophy. The contributions of Quran school of Muslim religion, as well as that of western missionaries despite their limitations and different levels of inputs should also be taken as the basis of foundation of traditional education in Ethiopia. Emphasising the Orthodox Church ownership of the traditional formal education, Dr Richard Pankhurst (1962:8), a renowned Ethiopian history writer, said the following: “Ethiopia education was traditionally in the hands of the church or more correctly in the hands of cathedrals, churches, monasteries, covenants and individual men and women who served them”.

Regarding the procedure and structure of the traditional church education, there were various levels and stages to provide elementary and intermediate schools and monastic universities with branches devoted to theology, history, poetry, music and medicine. Traditional education, which has also been called church education, used the Ge’ez language as a Mol in which the first stage of education consists of mastery of the alphabet or syllabics made up of 26 basic characters each with seven different forms and sounds. The teachers of these important social and religious institutes were priests and well-educated leaders of Orthodox local churches. The use of the Ge’ez language that was used from the 4th century AD until the reign of King Tewodros in the mid-19th century gave way to Amharic that became a language of the Imperial court and administration. Accordingly, a number of historians agree that the traditional church education system enabled Ethiopia to be the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa that had its own alphabet and writing system to conserve an ancient written culture and well-developed numerals (Bekerie, 1997:80; Cohen, 2000:90; Haileselassie, 1999:3).

Traditional formal church education consisted of different levels. According to Milkias (1976:80), The first stage covered mastery of the alphabet or syllabary made of 26 basic characteristics each with seven forms. The second stage consisted of what is called the Apostle’s alphabet which contains the first epistle general of St. John in Ge’ez that should be learned by heart. Writing practice began in this stage. The third stage called Gibre-Hawria, the act of the Apostle, was to be read aloud. The fourth stage

called Dawit, i.e. Psalms of David, began with reading of Book of Psalms. In this regard, one can see that traditional formal church education had structured lessons whose main contents were focused on reading with some sort of writing. In general, traditional education was supported by the Ethiopian Orthodox church, the mosque as well as society. Yigezu (2010:24) points out that traditional church education existed for 16 centuries in Ethiopia. In general, traditional church education that began in the 4th century continued until modern education began in 1908 during the reign of Emperor Menelik II. The mosque also played a major role and made a contribution as a result of the flourishing civilisation of the Arabs from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries AD in Ethiopia.

## **2.4 THE BEGINNING OF MODERN EDUCATION (1908)**

The ambition and commitment of modernising the country that had begun during the reign of King Tewodros II (1855-1868), began to take shape in Ethiopia during the time of Menelik II (1888-1913). Writers on the history of modern education in Ethiopia (Bishaw & Lasser, 2012:53; Wondemetegn, 2006:58; Yohans, n.d.:3) confirm that the commencement of modern education is attributed to the leadership of Emperor Menelik II, who was known for his great social and political reforms. Having understood the importance and necessity of modern education for developing the country and ultimately to escape from poverty and backwardness, Menelik II decided to open formal secular schools in the country. He realised that the only way to be part of the developing world at the beginning of the 20th century was through a government-led education system. The first school was named after him as Menelik II School and was opened in Addis Ababa in 1908 (Wodajo, 1959:24).

At the outset, Menelik II School was primarily meant to teach languages such as French, English and Italian and the teachers were Egyptians who were Coptic Church members. Arabic was also part of the curriculum and was taught to some extent. According to Negash (2010:28), one of the reasons for teaching European languages as well was to produce elites who could keep in touch and negotiate with the European countries so as to maintain the sovereignty of the colonisers. Since the administration of Menelik II gave emphasis to modern education, schools were opened in many of the



capital cities of the provinces despite the fact that there were challenges and opposition from Orthodox Church leaders and their proponents. The Orthodox Church leaders believed that modern education and the teaching of European languages would impact the cultural makeup and the traditional values of the country. This belief existed in almost all African countries. Ouane and Glanz (2011:23) explain this by saying “Multilingualism in Africa is widely perceived as a threat to national unity and the economy, leading national governments to justify obliging the majority of their citizens to use one official, often foreign, language, particularly in educational setting”. Eventually, however, the Ethiopian church withdrew from the government education system and decided to administer its own modern schools along its traditional lines.

Though modern education in Ethiopia was introduced in 1908, the system and the structure lacked coherence in its design until 1941 when Ethiopia came under the leadership of Emperor Haile Selassie I. The years 1941-1970 were named as the “Golden Age” as far as education in Ethiopia is concerned (Negash, 2010:8). The reason for being named in this way is that the system was characterised by innovation and a high demand for modern education with the aim of training the elite to run the political and administrative sectors and to provide professionals that would promote and expand the secular education system.

With regard to the MoI, however, during the Italian occupation, different languages were used in different regions, not to help children to learn in their language so that they could achieve better education, but rather to maintain the “divide-and-rule” principle of the Italian administrators. Accordingly, Amharic was the MoI, in Addis Ababa, Afaan Oromo in Oromia Regions, Sidamoo Afo in South of Sidama area, Kafinnino in the South area of Kafa area and Af Somali in Somali regions (Tefera, 2008:21). The author explains that the Italian rulers introduced these languages in education policy to divide the Ethiopian people along linguistic lines so that their unity as people of one country would be weakened. Furthermore, the fact that the language of instruction had been French was not considered as a problem nor was it a point of debate. However, only a small number of Ethiopian children were able to enter government schools although, in theory, it was said that government schools were open to all. It was meant only for the

children of the well-to-do families, the elites and those who lived in the urban areas. Later when King Haile Selassie I came to power in 1941, as mentioned above, the reconstruction, systematisation and expansion of formal education was prioritised and brought about major enhancements.

## **2.5 THE ENHANCEMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA**

### **2.5.1 Education during the time of the Imperial Haile Selassie I**

The modern education system that had been established during Emperor Menelik II's reign was expanded and enhanced significantly with a better system and structure at the time of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1941–1974) after he returned from exile. As many historians and educators agree, the education system during this time created confidence and optimism about other countrywide developments and achievement in many domains such as agriculture, health and industry that would benefit from modern education. As a matter of fact, many policies in Ethiopia acknowledged the link between education and development (Messay, 2010:9).

Though the establishment of the MoE took place in 1930, the years 1941–1974 indicated above brought remarkable educational achievements. The MoE embarked on expanding structured and well-organised modern education for the first time in the country. To that end, schools were built in many parts of the country, teachers were trained, curricula for different levels were designed and textbooks were published. The language of instruction which had been French was replaced by English for all Grade levels. In the mid-1960s, however, Amharic became the Mol for lower grades. King Haile Selassie's decision to develop Amharic as a major language of education was a part of the policy of his leadership of the country. Even though English and Italian were used in some schools, Amharic was used as the Mol for primary schools all over the country (Heugh, Benson, Bogale & Yohannes, 2012:46-47). Until this post-war era, there were no well-designed language curricula and objectives for teaching either Amharic or any other Ethiopian languages, although the Orthodox Church had played a major role in letting Amharic be used as an Mol in secular schools all over the country. In fact, the first primary school curriculum designed in 1947 was not revised until 1958

to include Amharic as the main language of instruction. The new policy stated: “The revised imperial constitution of proclamation 149 of 1955, Article 125 declared Amharic as the only official language of the whole empire making the language the sole medium of instruction in primary education” (Ministry of Education, USAID, AED, EQUIP II Project, 2008).

Throughout this time, apart from Amharic, all other indigenous languages existing in the country were used only orally. None of the 56 languages existing in Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Region (SNNPR) had been offered an opportunity to be used in writing and reading.

The Mol in primary schools changed frequently between Amharic and English during the post-war period of Haile Selassie’s kingdom and there was no written curriculum or formal policy for the teaching of Amharic in the government schools. In 1947, the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts decided to introduce Amharic as a subject in primary schools i.e. Grades 1–6 and English as an Mol. In 1958–1959, Amharic was implemented as the Mol for elementary grades and English for secondary schools and above. To that end, Amharic was regarded as an essential means of accessing better economic and educational advantage in Ethiopia.

In dealing with the drawbacks of the education system of this regime, Kassaye (2002:71) lists some problems as indicated below.

- The aims, philosophies and objectives of the Ethiopian education system have not been well-established.
- The Ethiopian culture and languages were not given due importance.
- The general needs of Ethiopians had not been clearly determined and the goals of the education system were obscure.

These problems are relevant to the teaching of the languages of minorities in Ethiopia and are used as focal points in the current study. It is thus clear that although changes occurred in the Ethiopian education system during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I, no consideration was given to the possibility of using the mother tongue of the

minority groups in the country as a subject or as an Mol at any level of the education system.

### **2.5.2 Education at the time of the Socialist Derg (1974-1991)**

The years from 1974–1991 marked the era of “socialist” Ethiopia under a military government called “Derg” (an armed forces coordinating committee) which overthrew the feudal aristocratic kingdom of Haile Selassie I. The Derg Administration and leadership proclaimed education as the major driver of development of the country. They realised the importance of education to embed the philosophy of socialism in society and to promote the Marxist and Leninist ideology among the young generation (MoE, 2008:25). This document further explains that the education system during the Derg era was relatively better and more progressive in terms of enrolment and expansion. The education policy included aspects such as education for production, education for class struggle, education for research and education for developing a socialist consciousness. Regarding this, the central committee report of the so-called Workers Party as indicated by Gemechu (2010:74) reads as follows:

The aim of socialist education is to mould citizens who have an all-rounded personality by inculcating the entire society with socialist ideology thus arming them with required knowledge for socialist reconstruction ... the fundamental aim of education is to cultivate Marxist-Leninist Ideology in the young generation, to develop knowledge in science and technology in the new culture and arts and integrate research with production to enable the revolution to move forward and secure productive citizens.

In fact, there are a number of educational achievements that were given due attention during that time among which a National Literacy and Development campaign with its major objective of eradicating illiteracy from the rural community including women was significant. The use of 15 local languages for a basic adult literacy programme is also worth mentioning. The expansion of primary and secondary schools is also one of the good achievements of the Derg era. On the other hand, the Derg time signified a deterioration in the quality of education specifically at primary education level since the government used untrained, low-level teachers to teach at the ever-growing numbers of elementary schools in rural areas. The “Degoma” teachers whose salaries were partly

paid in kind by the respective communities were taken from junior secondary schools or high schools. Though in the Derg's time, the modern education system accomplished undeniable achievements regarding access equity compared to the Haile Selassie I regime, the Mol remained Amharic in primary schools and English in secondary and tertiary levels until the current government took power in 1991. As far as research conducted at that time indicates, the use of Amharic as an Mol in primary schools has weakened students' use of non-Amharic languages. Alemu and Tekleselassie (2011:402) describe the education systems of each era as follows:

Until the current government took power in 1991, the media of instruction in Ethiopia's formal education system were Amharic (for elementary level) and English (for junior high and above). Whereas the socialist government (1974-1991) had encouraged the use of some 15 ethnic languages in non-formal education, the imperial regime (that ruled the country until 1974) preferred to use one official language (Amharic) with the intention of safeguarding national integrity.

Educators, researchers and historians such as Abbay (2004:613), Araya (2014:13), Van der Beken (2012:291) agree that the main reason for the use of Amharic in the country for many years was a means of maintaining the unity of the country as far as the previous political leaders of different regimes were concerned. Thus, introducing other languages for instructional purposes had been conceived as something that would disrupt the national unity and would bring about disintegration. Proponents of this idea favoured the use of one language as an Mol as a means of securing the country's future independence. To that end, it remained a major principle of the education system for several centuries until the change was made by the current government.

### **2.5.3 The Current Education Policy and Primary Education**

After the downfall of the Marxist military government in 1990, many changes were made in the Ethiopian education arena. Among these changes, the opportunities offered to indigenous languages that had never had the chance to be taught in schools were significant. These languages were given the right to be taught as a subject or to be used as a Mol. To that end, the current education and training policy has created an environment for primary school children to learn in their mother tongue. Regarding this,

the education and training policy of the country reads as follows: “Cognisant of the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their language, primary education will be given in nationality languages” (MoE, 1994:23).

As can be seen, the policy explicitly deals with the importance of mother-tongue education and the right of the children to learn in their own language. This is one of the major achievements of the Ethiopian education and training policy. In accordance with this, currently among the more than 89 indigenous languages in the country, more than 30 languages are used as a subject or as an Mol in primary schools (Derash, 2013, cited in Trudell, 2016:32).

In line with this, the current policy encourages the nationality languages to be used as an Mol from Grade 1–8 level. However, it also states the need for readiness and preparation to implement the use of mother tongue. Regarding this, the policy reads as follows: “Making the necessary preparation, nations and nationalities can either learn in their own language or can choose from among those selected on the basis of national and countrywide distribution” (MoE, 1994:23).

The issue of teacher training is also emphasised. This issue is among the major interests of this study and they are thoroughly discussed in the next chapters.

The current Ethiopian education policy also states that English should be offered as a subject in primary schools beginning from Grade 1. This means that children in primary schools in Ethiopia have to learn two or three languages including Amharic. To that end, the Ethiopian primary education has a multilingual education setup in the sense of an education programme offered in more than two languages or a programme in which children learn three languages in primary schools. A good education policy for languages in schools builds on school children’s actual linguistic resources and provides access to both local indigenous and global languages (Weber, 2014:1).

Benson (2005:2–3) states that many developing countries abandon the use of their own languages in schools and allow foreign languages to dominate the education system. Regarding this, the case in Ethiopia currently is different as the language of every nationality has the right to be used in primary schools provided that the necessary preparations are made. To that end, the major purpose of this study is to explore the

challenges faced in the implementation of multilingual education in Ethiopia in primary schools in minority language areas so as to identify the causes of the challenges and recommend possible solutions to overcome them. The study focuses in the selected minority languages in SNNPR. Figure 2.2 below shows the distribution of languages in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

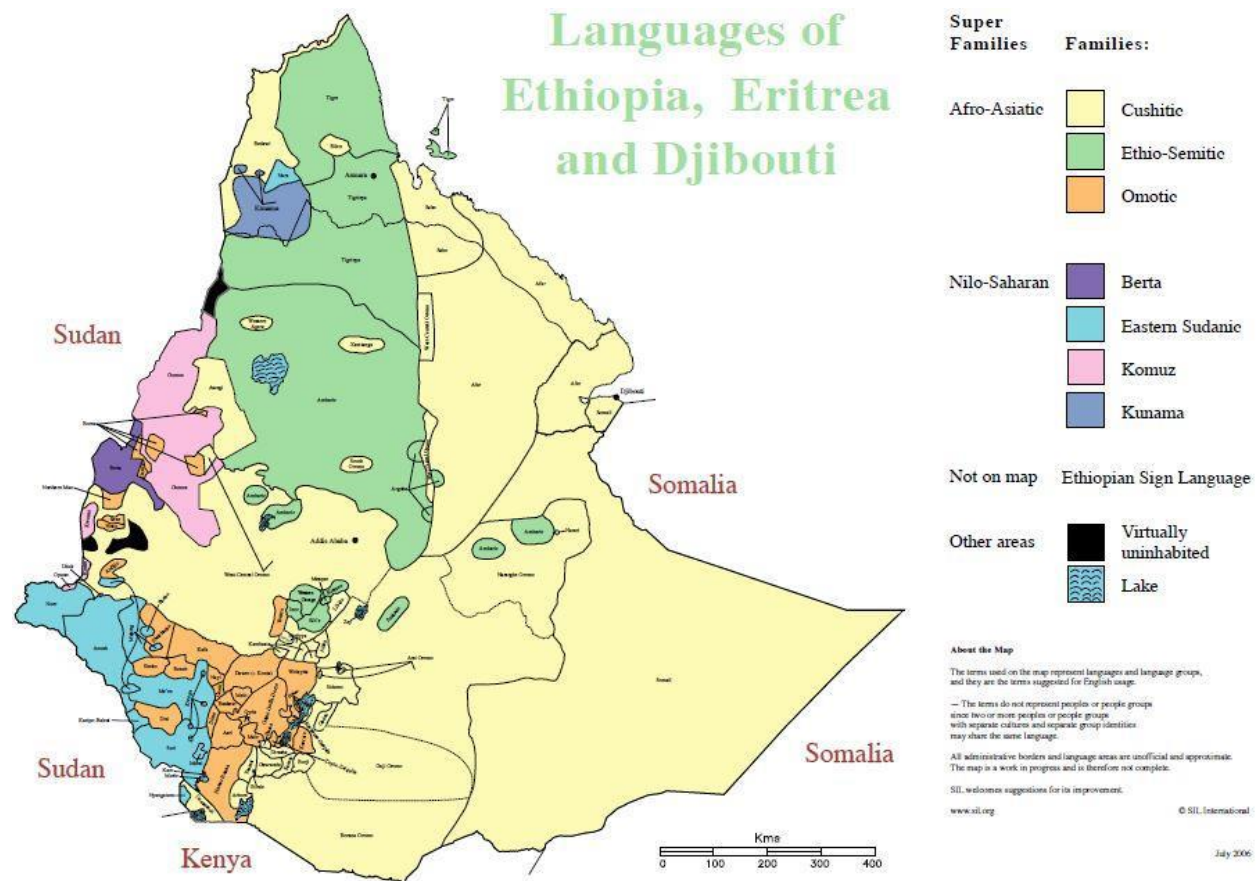


Figure 2.2: Distribution of languages in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti

Source: SIL Ethiopia (2013)

## 2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the history of the education system in Ethiopia was presented. Special reference was made to the development of language education. In this next chapter a literature review section will be presented. The chapter consists, the theoretical framework, the notion of mother-tongue-based multilingual education, the components of mother-tongue education, the concepts and ideas of language planning as well as more other relevant topics including the opinions of scholars in the field is also included.





## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY AND MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 provides the literature review of the study in which issues underpinning the importance of MTB MLE and its proper implementation are explained. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework of the study in relation to the notion of MTB MLE. Moreover, opinions of popular academics in the field of language-in-education are presented. The notion of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and majority and minority languages are discussed. Issues related to language planning, language policy, education and training policy, curriculum, and mother-tongue teachers' training in the context of Ethiopia are also part of this chapter. Models, principles in implementing MTB MLE are also discussed.

#### **3.2 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY**

Social constructivism is a typical theoretical stance of qualitative method of research (Creswell, 2009:8). The concept of social constructivism deals with the fact that people make use of their experience and social interaction as a foundation of knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, to build up their cognitive schema. It is a theoretical notion which stipulates that knowledge living in the mind of individual depends on what they know from their experience (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:29). When it comes to education, these experiences, cultural aspects and interactions are best manifested and communicated in the children's own language. This is a crucial means of concept formation and learning. This means that the experiences children bring to the school environment and to their classes play a role in constructing knowledge, skill, attitude and beliefs. These experiences are the result of children's interaction with the family, the peer group and other environmental connections. Moreover, the social constructivist theory believes that teaching and learning approaches should be based on the cognitive development of the child because of a child's cognitive constructions (Gray & MacBlain, 2012:74). In the same vein, Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2010:14-15) contend that

social constructivists attempt to understand the context of social phenomena within a specific environment. Based on the social constructivist theory, Saxton (2017:199) argues that development of thought in children depends on language and linguistic tools of the child and its relations with socio-cultural experience and interaction.

This theoretical assumption therefore relates to this study in that the purpose of the study is to investigate the implementation of children's learning in their mother tongue and to determine the stakeholders' and community members' contribution and input in this regard.

In addition, as Creswell and Poth (2017:21) contend, constructivist researchers often focus on the interaction among individuals within the specific contexts in which they live and work to gain an understanding of the historical and cultural settings of the participants. I relied upon the participants' views and opinions on the MTB MLE implementation in their vicinity. The questions forwarded to the participants were broad and general so that they could construct the meaning of a situation. "The more open-ended the questions, the better the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting". (Creswell & Creswell, 2017:n.p.).

Social constructivist researchers should also recognise that "their own backgrounds shape their interpretation" (Creswell & Poth, 2017:24), and they must "position themselves in the research" so as to understand and acquaint themselves with the existing scenario of the study sample areas. Accordingly, I followed the principles of the social constructivist theory since it suites the purpose of the study.

In general, since the purpose of this study is to investigate the context of mother-tongue education in minority language areas, the social constructivist theory was appropriate to the research. The research attempts to understand the multiple realities of teachers, teacher trainers and policy makers regarding MTB MLE. The goal of such research, according to social constructivist perspective, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. To that end, the questions asked were open-ended and general so that the participants could construct their meaning of the situation.

### **3.3 THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (ZPD) THEORY**

The ZPD theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978) is a key concept in the theory of social constructivism. In this theory, the Vygotskian idea called “scaffolding” plays an important role in children’s education. Scaffolding refers to the assistance that adults and more competent peers provide to children during educational episodes. Vygotsky emphasises the social experiences that children have in the family and school environment (Gray & MacBlain, 2015:92). Scaffolding, moreover, is a means of helping children to bridge the gap between what they have already learned and what they are expected to understand and be able to do as a result of their learning. As one of its major roles, scaffolding also mitigates negative emotions children might experience when they are frustrated (Moya, 2019:167). Vygotsky (1978:31) believes that learning requires interaction involving contact between the learner and other people, at all stages of life. He divided the interactions in two major types: the child's Actual Developmental Level (ADL) refers to a task the child is able to complete by themselves, while the child's Potential Developmental Level (PDL) refers to tasks that the child should be able to do with guidance and help. He argues that the transition from ADL to PDL is where learning takes place.

For this to take place, a child must receive guidance from More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Moalosi, 2013: 39) such as parents, teachers, other adults, and even peers of the same physical age and older children because they have a clearer understanding or greater ability with regard to a particular task and are able to impart this knowledge to learners to help them progress from their current level of understanding and ability to the next.

Furthermore, Vygotsky was an advocate of social constructivism. He emphasised the importance of culture and its context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Gray & McBlain, 2015:98). His major concern of education theory is the importance and the role social interaction plays in children’s education.

The theory of Vygotsky is central to any serious discussion of children's learning process. Social constructivism and the ZPD are closely aligned and appropriate to this study as they form a foundation for the educational aspect of children in relation to societies' input and reaction towards their children's learning in their own language – the mother tongue. Obviously, the cultural component is fundamental within mother-tongue education since the culture of a certain group is defined by its respective language. Mother-tongue education (MTE) involves both culture and social interaction, which is embedded in the indigenous language of the area.

Vygotsky (1981, cited in Cook & Cook, 2005:194) views both language and literacy as embedded in a social context and notes that children's interaction with knowledgeable members of their social groups enables them to internalise cultural tools such as language, literacy and mathematics which underpin higher psychological processes. "Language as part and parcel of culture or as a means of communication is vital in this realm. First it appears between people as an inter-psychological category, and then within the child as an intra-psychological category".

Moreover, the theory acknowledges and emphasises the social aspects of learning by recognising the role teachers play, formally or informally, to support the children in their efforts to learn and enable them to realise their full potential. Vygotsky's (1978) view was that language arises as a means of communication between a child and those around them, and that it is the social interaction that develops a child's learning and language. With this in mind, this research investigates how teachers are equipped and motivated to help the children in learning in their mother tongue.

According to the social constructivist theory in teaching and learning, consideration of the child's environment, age, culture, language and life experience is important. Vygotsky, like his contemporary, Piaget (1976:11), believed that children's development is the result of their interaction with their social environment. Obviously, this interaction can only be manifested through a language that enables the child to listen and speak properly and without difficulty.

Another important factor that is sometimes overlooked, according to Abtahi, Graven and Lerman (2017:275), is the role that context and culture play in the ZPD. They mention that development and learning take place both within family and at other times, in school, college or in the wider community. Learning can range from formal and structured, to informal and less obviously structured. In all cases, the interaction between the children and the teacher or the family can only be manifested in a language that everyone clearly understands. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers should be able to share information in a well-structured language the children understand at their level.

It is clear that language is very important in Vygotsky's ZPD. Learners must cooperate and collaborate with the teacher through dialogue which they are only able to do if they have at least the basic language skills needed in the language in which they are being taught. Ideally, learners and teachers should co-construct knowledge, each contributing what they know so that a shared understanding is reached (Alwaleedi, Gillies & Obaidul Hamid, 2019:1).

Teachers' major task is demonstrating and guiding the learner through new tasks, offering advice and motivation, and scaffolding tasks that the learner must complete in order to achieve the end result that the teacher regards as appropriate for the age and level of development of the learner. Cummins (2000:253) elaborates on what he calls identity negotiation, and power relations together with transformative pedagogy. He argues that transformative/intercultural pedagogy promotes interaction between teachers and students in the classroom as opposed to a coercive relation of power which fosters an implied assumption of the teaching/learning process as a neutral phenomenon in a social context.

### **3.4 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCES IN THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The ontological and epistemological stance of social constructivism theory in relation to qualitative research has its own views. Ontology of qualitative research, according to Cohen and Morrison (2018:288), has three major points worth discussing here:

- Qualitative research regards people as anticipatory, meaning-making beings who actively construct their own meanings of situations and make sense of their world and act in it through such interpretation (the constructivist/constructionist premise).
- Meanings used by participants to interpret situations are culture- and context-bound, and there are multiple realities, not single truths in interpreting a situation. History and biography intersect – we create our own future but not necessarily in situations of our own choosing.
- There are multiple holistic realities, constructed by individuals. People, situation, events and objects are unique and have meaning conferred upon them rather than having their own intrinsic meaning. Knower and known are interactive and inseparable.

Epistemologically, social constructivists claim that meanings are subjective, and knowledge is constructed from an experience and interaction among individuals. As a principle, the learning of individuals happens when learners make sense of new situations based on the foundational understanding they already have from their environment or their prior knowledge (Bada & Olusegun, 2015:66–70). This means that human beings construct and organise knowledge in their minds to deal with new information and that the most important thing that enables them to organise knowledge in their mind is the environment and the culture they live in. This knowledge, in turn, helps people to learn other new information.

Based on this theoretical assumption, this study lends itself to the constructivist paradigm. In line with this, MTB MLE incorporates the ability of the child to use language to understand the concepts of the school lessons linked to the environment and the context. In this regard, the idea of offering children an opportunity to learn in the language they know best and the societal and environmental situation that they understand better in their early years of schooling emanates from the constructivist paradigm. In dealing with interaction between educators (teachers) and students (children), Cummins (2000:247) explains what he calls “transforming pedagogy”. The concept of transforming pedagogy acknowledges the collaboration between the teacher and the children to enable them to “relate curriculum content to their individual and

collective experiences and to analyse broader social issues relevant to their lives”. It further means that the process extends children’s identity and simultaneously develops the linguistic and intellectual tools necessary for a collaborative critical inquiry. This approach is in line with the principles of MTB MLE in such a way that MTB MLE also gives prominence to the cultural background, psychological makeup and environmental reality of the child.

As indicated above, the study deals with the major theories, principles and models of MTB MLE and attempts to investigate how much policy intervention is required to closely link practice and implementation to the theories and principles upon which they are based. In doing so, the study explores whether or not these theories and principles relate to the existing education and training policy as well as the language policy to arrive at a conclusion about the current real situation in minority language areas. It also dealt with strategies derived to enable children to transition to another Mol later, generally when they are in Grade 4.

### **3.5 THE NOTION: MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION**

Language is fundamental to the interaction between the teacher and the children in the classroom. It is equally fundamental in helping children understand the concepts in written and read materials.

Mother-tongue instruction means using the learners’ mother tongue as the Mol (Ball, 2011:12). The term ‘mother tongue’, has various definitions which may include the following elements:

the language(s) that one has learned first; the language(s) one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others; the language(s) one knows best and the language(s) one uses most. ‘Mother tongue’ may also be referred to as ‘primary’ or ‘first language’ [or ‘local language’]. The term ‘mother tongue’ is commonly used in policy statements and in the general discourse on educational issues.

The notion of the ‘mother tongue’ according to the definition by UNESCO (1995, cited in Hornberger, 2008:138) is “The language which a person has acquired in early years and which normally has become his natural instrument of thought and communication”.

In the same vein, Hornberger (2008:129) quotes Pattanayak (1997) who defines mother tongue as:

... language with which one is emotionally identified. It is the language through which the child recognises and organises his (her) experience and environment around him (her). It is the language used to express one's basic needs, ideas thoughts, joys, sorrows and other feelings. It is a language that if one gives up, one may remain intellectually alive but would grow emotionally sterile.

The use of appropriate language in the school is one of many factors that are foundational in achieving quality education. In any educational system, language in general, and indigenous language in particular, is the most important instrument and storehouse of knowledge from which learners view the world and thereby accumulate knowledge as well as valuable socio-cultural experiences. According to Hornberger (2008:136–138), indigenous languages, or vernaculars, are the most important assets of human beings: not only are they a valuable resource of the society but they are also a repository of local knowledge, history and ideas. The writer emphasises that the very need for revitalising and developing indigenous local languages is so as not to lose the bulk of knowledge, cultural and social values contained within them. Clearly, one of the vital ways of protecting and developing language from decline and ultimately from vanishing altogether would be by using mother-tongue education.

The mother tongue as indicated above is the most important means of understanding the external world around us and is a means of expressing our internal feelings and emotions. It is also the very means of fruitful interaction, communication and expression of concepts and ideas (Gxelisk, 2009, cited in Alemayehu, 2012:4). In all these and many other explanations and definitions of mother tongue, we can see its importance in education. Thus, at the heart of all these definitions, the issue of mother-tongue education occupies a prominent place.

### **3.5.1 What is Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education?**

MTB MLE is a form of education that deals with the bridging of learning in the mother-tongue to using one or more other school languages. This means that if a child does not



understand an idea in a language in which he or she thinks and communicates, it is difficult to learn the words for that concept in the second language (Pinnock et al., 2011:8). The major purpose of MTB MLE is therefore to develop appropriate cognitive and reasoning skills that enable children to make use of their own language in schools alongside the languages of wider communication that are used nationally or internationally. In an appropriate application of MTB MLE, the children's environment, culture and psychological makeup are also significant features. The fact that the process of teaching and learning involves much listening and speaking during the early years, followed by reading and writing, makes it imperative to talk with children and to let them speak in classrooms in a language they know best and can easily use for communication (Pinnock, 2009:11). Generally, this will be the mother tongue, or first language, (L1) of the children. MTB MLE is a principle or a system that enables children to begin learning in a language they already know and so to learn the lesson content from their familiar environment and cultural background. This then enables children to systematically and gradually learn the second or third languages at the same time as lesson content in the new languages. As can be seen, this relates to the social constructivist theory of learning explained earlier in this chapter.

MTB MLE is therefore an education programme that addresses and recognises the child's mother-tongue culture and context as a foundation of learning (Pinter, 2017:17). It is a structured programme of language learning and cognitive development that provides a strong educational foundation (Barac, Bialystok, Castro & Sanchez, 2014:4). It also impacts the cultural and psychological makeup and environmental context of the child so as to maintain the fundamental educational principle that says that education should proceed from the "known to the unknown" (Rata, 2018:168). MTB MLE is a programme that uses the child's mother tongue as an Mol for all subjects in the early years of schooling and gradually introduces a second or even a third language as the child progresses through education (Pinnock, 2009:11). In this regard, it means that the use of the mother tongue only as a subject cannot be considered as MTB MLE (Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012:2). In the same vein, Van der Walt (2013:6) states that bi/multilingual education is about students' use of a multiplicity of languages in

different modes calling on available languages as well as varieties of language to maintain their learning and achieve their goals.

Van der Walt (2013:6) further suggests that the focus on one language for children's education is a violation of social justice and impedes effective learning and access to knowledge. MTB MLE is concerned with providing early instruction in a language that children will understand and then [adding] the second language (L2) for wider communication. This notion deals with the need for children to be proficient in the mother tongue at the foundational level of education which is essential for the learning of a second or third language.

The use of a mother tongue or first language (L1) in the early school years does not mean removing other school languages, for example Amharic or English, that will be used in later years as a subject or as Mol, in the case of Ethiopia (Derash, 2012:11). It is rather to enable children to begin learning, not only in a language they already know, but also with lesson content they are familiar with from their environment and cultural background. Then they can systematically and gradually move to new languages and content. As Skattum and Brock-Utne (2009:105) note, the promotion of multilingual education should not be viewed as a rejection of international languages for wider communication. It is rather about promoting responsive language-in-education policies that enhance teaching and learning in a local language and language that supports the later learning of other languages for wider communication. In stating the importance of MTE, Baker (2006: 293) states that L1 development throughout schooling is important for both majority and minority language children with an extra reason and benefit being in nurturing the minority language. In emphasising the importance of MTE as a foundational component of children's educational achievement, Baker (2006:293) and Dutcher (2004:11) state two essential and historical quotes from the UNESCO (1953) document titled *Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*:

1. It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among

the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (UNESCO, 1953:11).

2. It is important that every effort should be made to provide education in the mother tongue... on educational grounds we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible (UNESCO, 1953:47-48).

The significance of mother tongue as a Mol is emphasised and well justified in both quotations. Thus, both ideas favour the use of MTB MLE.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:2) state that the language used to teach different subjects in schools is decisive in students' educational achievements and outcomes. Furthermore, research by Blaz (2018) and Mustafawi and Shaaban (2019) has shown the global need of languages for people to communicate locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Wolff (2006) cited in Ouane and Glanz (2011:25) suggests a triangular model (Figure 3.1) as a good framework for bridging and making use of the different levels of languages for communication at local, regional, national and international level. He also suggests that this model is best incorporated in the curriculum of MTB MLE.



Figure 3.1: Triangular model of multilingualism in education

Source: Ouane and Glanz (2011:25)

According to Gopang, Parveen and Chachar (2018:207) using the mother tongue as a Mol in schools is an appropriate approach which helps new generations not only for pedagogical purposes and to acquire external, scientific knowledge, but it is also needed as a crucial means of preserving and promoting societies' indigenous language.

### **3.5.2 Components that contribute to Successful Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education**

The success of MTB MLE depends on various factors among which Ball (2011:6) lists the following:

- parents' and communities' attitudes and behaviours;
- individual and social factors affecting proficiency in the language of instruction;
- access to school;
- inclusion in education;
- the status of the mother tongue (e.g., high or low status; a majority or minority language); and
- quality of instruction.

Though these are factors that would be worthwhile for any type of education to be successful, they should be given more emphasis in minority language areas where children are using their mother tongue. Skutnabb-Kangas and Heughs (2012:272) also indicate the following crucial factors to conduct successful MTB MLE:

- Teacher quality and working conditions;
- Improved quality and supply of curriculum materials;
- Strengthen instructional support that enables children to understand their lessons; and
- Participation of the community to support the development of the schools.

In addition, Malone (2016:16) indicates what she calls essential components of MTB MLE for success and sustainability. The ten components she deals with are illustrated in Figure 3.2 below. These components are taken as the major framework of this study.



Figure 3.2: Components of successful MTB MLE

Source: Malone (2016:16)

Malone (2010, 2016) describes why and how each component should be used for the implementation and successful accomplishment of the programme. Accordingly, her reasons are summarised below:

- Preliminary research: This component calls for the policy makers' attention to organisations or individuals that could conduct preliminary research in each language community. Such research identifies the language that students of each school understand and use at home and in their surroundings. It also helps to identify the national, regional and local resources that can be mobilised for support of the programme. It is also useful to identify the national, regional and local factors that may hamper the implementation and sustainability of the programme.
- Supportive policy: This is a component that deals with the language policy that promotes MTE so that leaders of the education sector and relevant officials who

advocate and promote MTE will be working accordingly. Clearly unless there is a language and education policy that supports the promotion and utilisation of MTE, it will be difficult to mobilise both material and human resources for the programme. Thus, a supportive policy is vital in this regard.

- Supportive partnership: Supportive partnership is vital in such a way that the collaborative effort of stakeholders, including INGOs and local NGOs, with the government plays a paramount role in the successful accomplishment of the programme.
- Awareness raising and mobilisation: The aim of raising awareness and mobilisation is that all relevant stakeholders will receive the information, motivation and support they need to develop and sustain MTB MLE. Among these goals of awareness raising are the understanding of parents about the purpose and benefits of MTB MLE and their confidence that it will help the children. This is a component that deals with the attitude of parents about language use in education. The support community leaders give to MTB MLE is also a result of this component. The goals of awareness raising extend from the local language community level through the province and district up to national level.
- Acceptable alphabets: Alphabet development is a significant goal of MTB MLE. Most ethnic minority languages have been used for oral communication for centuries. Some have had their own writing systems, but others have never been put into a written form. The process of developing a new or revised alphabet includes the following activities:
  - Language survey: a task that involves collecting information about the language: the number of speakers, the number of dialects, attitude of the speakers of the language about it, and where it is used in everyday life such as the social, economic, political, religious and cultural domains.
  - Language analysis: this refers to identifying the parts of the language that need to be represented by letters or symbols.
  - Trial alphabet: a task that calls for conducting a workshop in which the mother-tongue speakers of the language with the help of language experts identify the symbols or letters (i.e., the alphabet) that will represent the sounds.

- Testing: as the name indicates it involves a checking of the alphabet through observing people using written language.
- Revision: Identifying alternative letters or symbols that can be used in case problems are found with the trial alphabet.
- Approval: This is the last stage in selecting an acceptable alphabet through another alphabet workshop with mother-tongue speakers, linguists and other relevant stakeholders.
- Curriculum and instructional materials: Because successful MTB MLE programmes include the same basic goals, which is to help students be successful in their studies, there are major goals to be given prominence as curriculum materials are developed.
- Reading and learning materials: When children learn how to read and write, they need a reservoir of books and reading materials around them in the school and ideally also at home. To that end, the development of quality mother-tongue materials is at the heart of successful MTB MLE programmes. It is advisable to train and use mother-tongue speakers in developing MTB MLE materials.
- Teachers' recruitment and training: Good teachers are needed for the implementation of quality education programmes. The need to be highly motivated and understand the importance of MTB MLE for children's educational achievement. Students will not be successful if the teachers are not motivated, properly trained and receive ongoing support.
- Realistic implementation plan: A clear and realistic plan is needed for the development of a programme that will achieve the goals of its stakeholders. The implementation plan should address each component of Malone's (2010,2016) diagram.
- Monitoring and evaluation: This is a very important component of a programme if MTB MLE is to succeed. A well-structured and wisely designed monitoring and evaluation plan contributes a great deal to the success of the programme (Malone: 2016, 2010).

As can be seen from the discussion, the various components of MTB MLE and how each component should be used are important. Accordingly, I have explained each component and how they should be applied. Unless these components are applied, the MTB MLE programme might not be successful. These components of MTB MLE are crucial and fundamental in this study as it primarily focuses on whether or not these components have been put in place before beginning and promoting the programme in the target language areas.

### **3.5.3 Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education and its Impact on the Development of Other Sectors**

- Education in recent years has become key focus of policy and politics. It is at the root of economic transformation and civil society both in developed and developing countries (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012:49). In other words, education is a driving force in the development of a country. Joshi and Verspoor then further argue that governments and international organisations increasingly refer to ‘learning’ or ‘life-long learning’ as opposed to education. This may be linked to political and economic objective(s) of creating a knowledge economy and the knowledge society of the future. Many researchers and educators agree that MTB MLE is a means of social, economic and political development. In relation to this, Ouane and Glanz (2010:16–20) explicitly state the importance of MTB MLE as a means of conflict resolution since it recognises the cultural and linguistic identity of ethnic groups. They say that recognition of diversity does not compete against the unity of a state because identification with the state will be one of many identities of individuals. They also pinpoint the fact that MTB MLE has a direct impact on the environment.

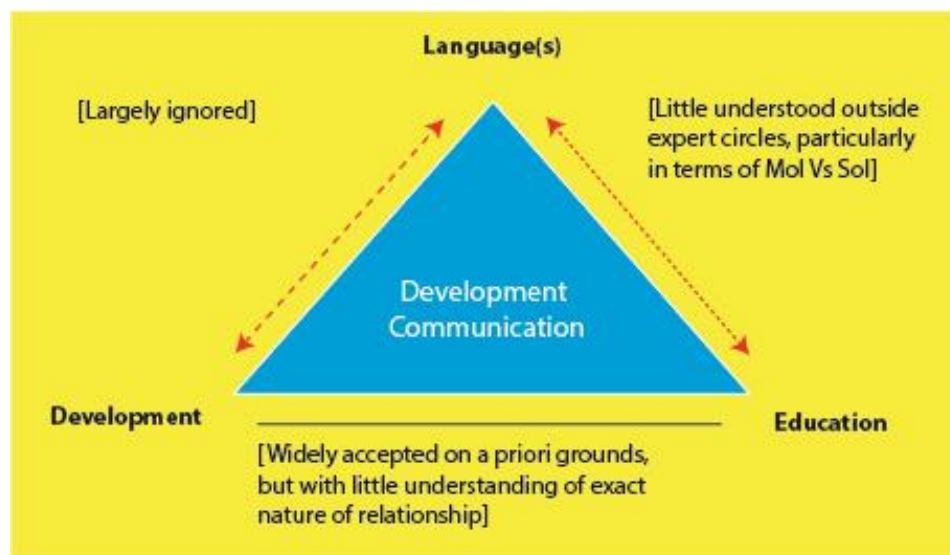
As Wolff explains in Ouane and Glanz (2011:53), the vitality of language in the realm of development is little understood outside of expert circles. Wolff (2011:53–54) suggests that in the multilingual setup of almost all African societies, development communication in Africa requires multilingual strategies for the reasons stated below:

- Development strategies need to be clearly communicated when stakeholders with different language backgrounds are involved.



- Communication takes place largely through language, either oral or written, whether it is a foreign, official, indigenous or local language.
- Communication is made possible when language competence and language repertoires are shared. It is essential for development that communication between local people and advisers or consultants takes place through the languages that are most understood by the local peoples.

This is where Wolff (2011:53–54) calls for close cooperation between linguists, educationalists and economists in formulating the model he calls the “Language-



development-education triangle”. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3: The language-development-education triangle

Source: Wolff (2011, cited in Ouane & Glanz, 2011: 49)

Many scholars have dealt with the role of education in promoting individual freedom and empowerment as well as its being central in taking the most pivotal place and pride in the struggle for development (Djité, 2008:53). There are a number of studies that have demonstrated the strong interrelationship between education and productivity, which is a major factor in development. Though the notion of development mainly refers to economic growth, it cannot take place unless it relies upon other significant sectors such as education and health. It is a fact that it will be difficult for an uneducated

(illiterate) population to get out of poverty and a backward living style. The need to educate each generation becomes imperative. An unhealthy work force will never be able to produce sufficiently to benefit individuals or the nation. Brock and Alexiadou (2013:2), referring to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Education for All (EFA) documents that prescribe the core principles of educating citizens, note that the keyword in the MDG or SDG is 'Development' which refers to formal education for the enhancement of national development, especially economic development.

However, as Brock and Alexiadou (2013:2) elaborate, there is no direct causal connection between investment in education and national economic growth. They say that, although there is a connection, it is extremely complex and as yet, little understood. In this regard, Wolff (2011:65) notes that the impact of MTB MLE on social and economic development has been huge. In relation to social development, he refers to MTB MLE as a means of conflict resolution through recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity. Concerning this fact, Wolff (2011:65) points to three major features, as follows:

- Recognising cultural identities has resolved conflicts instead of creating them because cultural identity was not the cause of these conflicts.
- At the heart of multilingualism is belonging. Human beings always have several identities (gender, religion, nationality, profession, ethnic groups and friends). They belong to and share the values of a variety of social groups. Thus, the recognition of diversity correlates negatively with linguistic diversity and does not compete with the unity of a state because identification with the state will always be one of many identities of individuals.
- There is no proof that economic development correlates negatively with linguistic and cultural diversity. On the contrary, there are indications that economic growth is enhanced because more empowered and creative people are able to contribute.

UNESCO (2014a:144) generalises the above points by saying, "Education enables people to escape from the trap of chronic poverty and prevents the transmission of

poverty between generations”. This means that education is one of the major factors that contributes to poverty alleviation.

A report funded by UNICEF (2016:12) on a language, education and social cohesion initiative in Malaysia indicates that considering minority language groups’ mother tongue in the education system is valuing their culture, history and customs which are major features of development and is also a means by which discrimination between minority and majority languages can be avoided.

In this regard, the choice of language of instruction becomes much more important in such a way that the culture and history of a respective community is embedded in its language. To that end, equitable universal education is a key goal of creating a fair, healthy and socially inclusive society. By the same token, Djité (2008:79) notes that sustainable development cannot be achieved without language since language is fundamental to communication and understanding and is a prerequisite for any other learning. As far as Djité is concerned, MTE is not only about basic principles of learning but it also recognises the existing knowledge and practices of the language community involved. Brock and Alexiadou (2013:95–96) state the importance of education to maintain development and the need to make the education policy based on this fact. Modernisation Theory that deals with education growth is not only about individuals’ productive skills it is also about changing their attitude to all aspects of life (ibid.). This theory focuses more on internal or domestic factors that can lead to development from building industrial and trade infrastructure, to investing in human capital and changing individual attitudes, skills and social relations. One of the internal and domestic factors, as far as education is concerned, would be the sociolinguistic treasure of the community. This treasure is their mother tongue that plays the most important role in the development arena. Djité (2008:53–54) confirms the link between education and productivity by citing a study conducted in 13 developing countries that proved that four years of primary education has increased productivity of smallholding farms by 7–10%.

All economics experts and education specialists agree on the paramount role of education for development in general and the MTE in particular.

### **3.5.4 Models, Principles and Practices in Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education**

The success of MTB MLE depends on various factors, among which the design of appropriate curriculum, properly designed training of teachers and a plan to involve parents or the language community at large are the major ones. In addition, the type of bi/multilingual education model, the policy and implementation processes are equally significant for the effective accomplishment of the programme.

There are two main views with respect to the issue of language-in-education. The argument between these views is based on the degree to which the child's first language / mother tongue should be used in the instruction of the curriculum.

#### **3.5.4.1 The subtractive and early-exit model**

This model advocates for the continued use of an official or foreign language as the major and basic Mol in the education system. It gives less significance to MTE. According to Heugh (2011:113–115), a subtractive model is a model that has the learner move from the mother tongue to an official or foreign language as early as possible. The subtractive, or early-exit model, might, in certain circumstances, involve a direct use of the official or foreign language as Mol from the first year of school. The model is sometimes referred to as the 'submersion model' which means that the child is submerged in the second language. This leads to a 'survival of the fittest' or 'sink or swim' scenario. In other words, the weak or subtractive model aims at enabling minority languages students to transition from their home language to the dominant school language as quickly as possible.

This model is applied in the sampled minority languages on which this study focuses. The mother tongue as an Mol has been used from Grade 1 to 4 only. From Grade 5 onwards, children are moved to the use of English as the Mol before they have adequate skill in English to enable them to learn other subjects in it.

#### 3.5.4.2 The additive and late-exit model

This model supports the use of mother tongue languages as the primary Mol and advocates for the gradual introduction of an additional (often foreign) language throughout the education system. This view is described as the late-exit and additive model of MTB MLE. Weber (2014:2) notes that the additive model is a strong model while the subtractive model is a weak model in which the former aims at developing both majority and minority languages as a means of enhancing education for the benefit of bi/multilingual students. The overall objective of the additive model is the use of L1 or mother tongue as an Mol while the official language is taught as a subject until children acquire a high level of proficiency and ability to use the official or foreign language at the level needed. The proponents of this model advocate that the L1 or mother tongue should not be removed from being used as an Mol.

#### 3.5.4.3 Transfer and transition of skills

Heugh (2011:136) defines the different concepts of transfer and transition in language acquisition and language education as part and parcel of the models mentioned above. According to her definition, transfer is a cognitive process where what is known in the first language such as the knowledge of the language and academic concepts are transferred to the second language. This knowledge includes the skills of reading and writing as well as reading and writing for different purposes such as stories, letters, essays or historical accounts. However, effective transfer from the first language to a second language is not possible until the first language is sufficiently well-established. Similarly, Cummins (2000:55–59) deals with two notions known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skill (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins notes that native speakers of a certain language come to school with full fluency in the language regarding the use of its grammar and the sociolinguistic forms within familiar social contexts. This is what is called BICS. Schools should spend a considerable number of years on BICS to enable the children to learn academic concepts through the respective language or to enrich the language with linguistically academic terminologies so that children can successfully progress in their further education. He calls this CALP. Thus, successful transfer from the first language to the

new language is possible if – and only if – the first language is sufficiently developed (Sibanda, 2017:1).

On the other hand, Oppenheim, Wu and Thierry (2018:1701) mention that transition is not necessarily a cognitive process. Rather it is a planned strategy for shifting or switching teaching from the first language to the second language as an Mol. Hughes (2011, cited in Ouane & Glanz, 2011:105) explains this idea by giving the following example: if an English speaker sees text in another European language for the first time (for example, Spanish), the English speaker will recognise sentences and words and even be able to ‘read’ them aloud. However, this does not mean that the English speaker has any idea of the meaning of the words. This simply means that the fact that the scripts of the other language and English are similar, and someone who reads and speaks English will not have a problem in decoding the letters and in pronouncing the words. However, it is impossible for the person to create meaning from what they read.

In general, transfer to the second language will be effective only when learners have adequately developed CALP in their L1 or mother tongue in which they can understand and comprehend meanings from text. Similarly transition to any second language is equally ineffective and harmful if children have not learned enough of the second language to function adequately across the curriculum. Heugh (2006, cited in Gemechu, 2010:14) argues that the longer students can be taught in their mother tongue, and have a well-resourced second language as a subject, the better they will perform in the second language. They are also more likely to perform better in mathematics and science than learners who have an early transition to a second language.

#### 3.5.4.4 Principles underlining mother-tongue-based multilingual education

Many scholars have come up with various principles and components that would result in successful implementation of MTB MLE. There are four key principles underlying MLE. These are:

- Striving for educational equity: This is a principle that refers to providing high quality learning opportunity for students of different background (Weber, 2013:3; Mwaniki,

Arias & Wiley, 2017:12). It is a principle that deals with the ultimate goal of MTB MLE which provides equity and quality of education.

- Structuring for integration: A principle that deals with equality of resource, building on all status of language community. This principle can be included under the overarching equity principle (Weber, 2013:3).
- Affirming identities: A principle related to linguistics and culture identities building on their resources including non-standard, vernacular varieties (Wedin, 2020:1).
- Promoting additive bi/multilingual education: As indicated above this principle deals with the importance of the access to both minority and majority languages for students in today's increasingly multilingual world for all sorts of reasons such as those related to identity and for the reason of instrumentality which is a concern of mobility (Brisk, De Jong & Moore, 2017:325).

### **3.6 LANGUAGE POLICY, LANGUAGE PLANNING AND EDUCATION**

#### **3.6.1 Language Policy**

There is a body of literature that defines policy in various ways in relation to the respective discipline involved. The MoE (2008:13) defines policy in general as whatever governments choose to do or not to do. Messay (2010:131) explains language policy as a manifestation of the socio-cultural intent of humankind. He contends that language policies should be based on democracy, freedom and equality through an emphasis on fundamental human linguistics rights.

Language policies must also be equally sensitive to the fact that, in a plural polity, all languages are equal. Language policy seeks to regulate the interaction of ethnic groups within a modern nation-state. Language policy and language planning are vital in all education systems. Ferguson (2006:1) describes language planning as “organised interventions by politicians, linguists and others in language use and form and the academic discipline whose subject matter is the study of these practices”. Once the states of Africa and Asia were no longer under a colonial power, language planning and policy could develop more easily, partly because their patterns of language were not as rigid as those of the older states in Europe (ibid.). In the view of Ouane and Glanz

(2010:15), effective language policy should reflect the linguistic reality of the respective country. Language experts, linguists and educationalists such as Pennycook (2017:125), Wiley and Garcia (2016:49) and Wright (2016:148), agree that all languages in a community or society must be accommodated in a language policy no matter their status, demographic strength and distribution, economic strength, state of development, sociolinguistic vitality, functions, legal status, estimation, geographical distribution, and readiness for literacy and numeracy. This is what is called “egalitarian multilingualism” (François, 2012:93).

According to Ferguson (2006:16–17), it is preferable to regard language policy and planning as closely related components rather than taking them as separate categories. Wright (2016:84) describes language planning as a conscious effort to develop a language or introduce other languages into the educational system, which involves “indicative, regulative productive and promotional functions”. She further explains that the term language planning is used to mean any effort to modify language form and use. Alisjahbana (2019:109) calls this “language engineering”. However, many nations have difficulty in preparing or changing language policies as they affect ethnic groups which often in competition. The major language problem which face the policy makers of such nation states are choice of national or official languages, choice of alphabets and choice of Mol.

Coleman (2007:16) notes the two types of language policy in use among African countries namely: endoglossic and exoglossic. The endoglossic policy involves the promotion of one or several indigenous languages as the official or national language while the exoglossic policy involves the adoption of the ex-colonial language, external to the country, as an official or national language. In relation to this classification, the Ethiopian language policy relates to the endoglossic type of policy since the country uses its indigenous languages as both federal working language / official / or national languages or working languages of each regional state. Djité (2008:56) provides the most comprehensive classification of languages in education policies and practices in Africa, dividing them into three categories:



- Countries in which the colonial administration favoured the use of African languages as a Mol in the first three or four years of education. These were countries that were under British and Belgian and/ or German influence. These countries have a tradition of MTE.
- Countries in which the colonial administration discouraged the use of African languages as an Mol in schools.
- Countries in which there was a dual policy or whose language policy diverged from that of the colonial administration either because they experienced a change in colonial administration or for any number of other historical reasons.

In fact, Ethiopia does not belong to any of the three categories. Neither does it have any colonial language used, since the country was not colonised and has been using its own indigenous language Amharic, at least in the lower primary schools, even in the previous years. Regarding the endoglossic and exoglossic language policies of Africa, Coleman (2007:18) developed the following table.

Table 3.1: Use of ex-colonial or dominant indigenous languages among African countries

Language category	Description	Number of countries
Endoglossic	Exclusive use of an indigenous language as official / national medium	2 (3.6 %)
Largely Endoglossic	Use of indigenous languages as official /national medium with limited use of an ex-colonial language	8 (14.6 %)
Largely Exoglossic	Official/national medium with symbolic/limited use of an indigenous language in secondary domains exclusive use of ex-colonial languages	27 (49.1 %)
Exoglossic	An official national medium	18 (32.7%)
Total		55 (100.0)%

Source: Coleman (2007:18)

The categorisation above appears to include the Ethiopian context. Ethiopia has a language which was used as the only working language for many years. However, currently, this is not the case since other languages have been offered the opportunity

to be used as languages of education and for official purposes as well. Amharic has been the de-facto societal lingua franca in Ethiopia.

### **3.6.2 Language Planning**

Language planning is the other paramount notion which is part and parcel of a language policy. Ferguson (2006:17) defines language planning as “the organised pursuit of solutions to language problems”, typically at the national level. In other words, language policy includes decision-making and goal-setting while language planning is the foundation for the implementation of these goals. Gemechu (2010:112) argues that language policy provides the rationale for language planning while language planning actually tests the practicability of these ideas. This shows that language policy and planning are linked to one another.

The distinction seems justified when one considers how often policies are promulgated but not implemented, but it also seems to view language planning primarily as a set of technical activities or managerial operations, being undertaken after decisions have been made by politicians or regulators (Husna, 2018:54). This notion is resisted by language planning scholars on the grounds that political and social considerations impact the implementation as much the initial decision-making (Wiley & Garcia, 2016:49).

According to Ferguson (2006:21), there are three major steps that are used for language planning, these are:

- Graphisation: refers to the adoption of a writing system for an oral language and the establishment of spelling and other orthographic conventions such as capitalisation and punctuation.
- Standardisation: the process of one variety of a language becoming widely accepted throughout the speech community as a supra-dialectical norm rated above regional and social dialect.
- Modernisation: the process of a language becoming equal with other developed languages as a medium of communication.

According to Ferguson (2006:20) and Hornberger (2006:28), there are three categories of language planning which were first formulated by Henze Kloss in 1969. These are:

- **Status Planning:** A type of planning that deals with the role of language in a society and that addresses the right and responsibilities of the people using it. According to Ferguson (2006:20), status planning addresses the function of language(s) in society, and typically involves the allocation of languages to official roles in different domains such as government, education and other sectors. Ferguson argues that these decisions either enhance or detract from the status of the language(s). Coperahewa (2011:229) notes that “status planning, by its very nature, is a political activity” though linguists are sometimes consulted while decisions are made by the government.
- **Corpus Planning:** A type of planning that is concerned with the actions and activities related to the adequacy of the language itself. According to Baker (2006: 51), corpus planning involves modernising terminology, as well as standardisation of the grammar and spellings. To that end, corpus planning deals with all aspects of standardisation, vocabulary and linguistics such as phonology, morphology, aspects of the language as well as the grammatical functions and usage. In other words, corpus planning addresses the form, the code and seeks to engineer changes that deal with graphisation, standardisation and modernisation. This section of planning needs more involvement of linguists than the status planning that can be done by politicians and administrators (ibid.).
- **Acquisition planning** which is a dimension that provides people with the opportunity of learning or acquiring languages. Baker (2006:50) describes acquisition planning as the “bedrock of language planning”. According to Gorter and Cenoz (2017:232), acquisition planning is mainly the process of language education policy in which the government decides which foreign language should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Table 3.2: An integrative approach framework for language police and planning

Type	Policy planning approach (On form)	Cultivation planning approach (on function)
Status planning (About use of languages)	Officialisation Nationalisation	Revival Maintenance

Type	Policy planning approach (On form)	Cultivation planning approach (on function)
	Standardisation of status Proscription	Spread Interlingua communication / international
Acquisition planning (About users of language)	Group Education/School Literary Religious Mass-Media Work	Reacquisition Maintenance Shift Foreign language / second language/ literacy
Corpus planning (About language)	Standardisation: Corpus Auxiliary code Graphisation Modernisation: Lexical Stylistic Renovation: Purification	Standardisation: Corpus Auxiliary code Graphisation Modernisation: Lexical Stylistic Renovation: Purification

Source: (Adapted from Hornberger, 1994:78)

In Ethiopia, to date, there has not been a specifically and separately documented language policy. However, the constitution and the education and training policy have highlighted the pedagogical and political need for developing and using the languages of Ethiopia. These documents that are considered as language policies providing equal rights to more than 90 language groups to develop and use their respective languages in the courts, in governmental and other political entities, in cultural and business communications, and in education. The argument, according to Yohannes (2015:129), is that where language policy is not clearly articulated, different stakeholders within the community interpret policy in different ways which results in contradiction and confusion. Thus, language policies, including policies for education and training, need to come up with clear set of principles and guidelines.

The documents mentioned above do not, however, specify which, how many, or in what order, the languages should enjoy priority in governmental support for further development, nor do they hint at any limits as to the number and extent of the languages in general. In the absence of such specifications, the presumption is that all of them should have the right to find the necessary resources, whether through competition for governmental support or through other means. Practical considerations would suggest that given limited resources in the country or any given linguistic community, the law should provide some guidelines to balance the ideal with the practicality. In this regard, a well-developed language planning system should be in place.

### **3.7 THE ESSENCE OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY AND MAJORITY LANGUAGES**

As discussed in the following paragraphs, different scholars see the contextual definition of “minority” and “majority” in different ways. Some authors associate minority and majority (non-dominant and dominant) languages with the size of population in a given geo-political area. For others it is an issue of political, economic and cultural position in a given society (Atkin, 2012:1–2).

To that end, for Ouedraogo (2000:12), majority languages are those spoken by most of the population for whom it is a mother tongue or a first language, and minority languages are those spoken by a small number of ethnic groups within a country. For May (2006:255), the definition of minority and majority is based on clearly observable differences and discrimination in relation to power, status and entitlement rather than numerical size of population. Ball (2011:11) points out that “the concept of linguistic diversity itself is relative and is usually measured in terms of national boundaries, giving some languages the status of majority language” and others the status of “minority language according to specific national contexts”.

As an example, Ball (2011:11) mentions Mandarin as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world. It is a majority language in China, but in other countries where only a small part of the population is Chinese, it has the status of a minority language in terms of the national or majority languages of those countries. Furthermore, in a large

country a language may be a minority language while in a smaller country it may be regarded as a majority language. However, a large majority of the world's languages, including sign language and braille, tend to be minority languages in any national context. Thus, the term 'minority' is ambiguous and may be interpreted differently depending on the context because it may be influenced by the number of speakers, social use and acceptance or because policies determine the status of the language.

Paulston and Heidemann (2006:294) explain that the most important aspect regarding characteristics of minorities is whether the relationship status with the majorities is superordinate or subordinate. This idea of being superordinate or subordinate deals with the issue of being a privileged (dominant) or non-privileged (non-dominant) ethnic group in terms of the language use.

In many instances, the inequalities of languages are the result of unequal power relations within society. May (2006:258) further argues that majority languages, in most cases, are manifested by having political power, being privileged and by exercising social prestige. As a result, they impose their language to be used by the minority language communities and eventually the minority languages will be at a risk of death

In short, the inequalities associated with languages are the outcome of unequal power relations in any given society that has resulted in a lack of languages being developed for various uses such as education, health, and other economic and social benefits. On the other hand, the dichotomy of majority and minority languages in most Africa countries is the result of colonisation.

Ricento (2006:233) argues that the concept of a nation-state having one national language is neither natural or inevitable. Instead, it is a man-made phenomenon that goes hand-in-hand with the political ideal of building one nation to maintain unity of a certain society. The people who consider multilingualism as a threat to the unity and stability of a state tend to promote the abolishment of minority languages, implying that the latter have little value.

As a result, languages have been given their relative and subjective positions as "good, useful, valuable" or "bad, useless, valueless" within a political system (Gemechu,

2010:21). With the choice and preference of language dependent on external factors, “minority language” speakers experience a major disadvantage in that the language they use in their everyday lives becomes threatened and could fall into disuse. However, according to Cohen (2005, cited in Coleman & Coleman, 2005:79), all languages, whether majority or minority, represent a complete system of thought and communication and have the ability to express all of the ideas that exist in the societies where they are used and are therefore equal from a theoretical or ideological perspective. This assumption of the possibility of creating equity for these languages in an education system while using several languages as the MoI is based upon the idea that some fundamental aspects of languages are inherently equal, at least in the sense that they can perform identical functions.

In general, language rights tend to be one of the first rights that minorities have claimed in times of political change and revolution. These claims for linguistic rights range from the official and legal status of the minority and indigenous languages, to the language of learning and teaching in educational institutions, or in the media. Indeed, linguistic rights that are enshrined in international documents such as the Barcelona Declaration (UNESCO, 1996) are being exercised in many minority languages of some countries of the world, including in Ethiopia, which is the concern of this study.

### **3.7.1 Language as a Human Right (Linguistic Rights)**

As far as human rights declarations are concerned, one of the major human rights is the right to using one’s own language in various arenas of life, including education. In general, linguistic rights and the right of children to be educated in their mother tongue, or native language, are given high regard in all international conventions and declarations (Sahin, 2018:344). The right to MTE is among the most important rights for any minority language community (Ricento, 2006:275). This right is also known as the linguistics right. The right of the child to learn in his mother tongue has been declared and became international law in 1990 and was ratified by 191 countries of the world (Dutcher, 2004:13). This declaration seems to have been implemented in some countries, though not all countries of the world are exercising it. However, the UN Convention emphasises that all children must have access to relevant and meaningful

education whatever their background, their living area and the language they speak. The statement of the declaration reads as follows:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or own language (United Nations, 1990: Article 30).

The Article above obviously deals with the fact that linguistic minority groups should not be deprived of their rights, not only to make use of their own language, but also all other heritages they own.

Furthermore, language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but is also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group. Respect for the languages of persons belonging to different linguistic communities is therefore essential to creating peaceful coexistence. This applies both to majority groups, to minorities and to indigenous peoples.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2008:1) in a report for a UN forum on minority issues established by Human Rights Council Resolution 6/15 explains the two major articles on the UN declaration about the Right of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities – General Assembly Resolution 47/135/of December 1992, and notes that although the declaration stipulates every right of minority groups, including MTE, most education systems are not able to implement MTB MLE adequately. According to Skutnabb-Kangas, a lack of MTB MLE does not help the cognitive and academic achievements of minority language children. This is because the subtractive model of MTE is implemented rather than the additive model. The subtractive model works on the principle of using dominant or majority group languages as the main school language rather than the indigenous language.

### **3.7.2 Dialect, Orthography, Language Revitalisation and Standardisation**

The use of minority languages in the education system calls for a realisation of issues related to various realities of minority languages, such as language death, language



revitalisation, language shift, language maintenance, dialect, orthography, standardisation, and harmonisation of language. However, to maintain relevance as well as context and content of this thesis, I would like here to limit the discussion to three of the above-mentioned components of language. They are dialect, orthography and standardisation, as they are directly related to the topic of minority languages and language education in general, and to MTB MLE in particular.

These issues that are related to language development are also a part and parcel of language policy. As Moodley (2013:27) indicates, among the 229 countries of the world only eight are monolingual, 30 countries are bilingual, and 20 countries are trilingual. He states that the number of indigenous languages spoken in the remaining 171 countries ranges from 4 to 836. Most of these languages have varieties of dialects and the orthography and scripts of those that have written forms differ accordingly. There are varying estimates of the number of living languages in the world, i.e. languages which still have speakers using or at least remembering them. This means that there are a number of languages that no longer survive because of never having written forms that would protect them from disappearance and enable them to be passed from one generation to the next through schooling and literature development. When talking about revitalisation, maintenance and development of languages, the issues of dialect, orthography and standardisation are important.

#### 3.7.2.1 Dialect

A dialect is a local variety of a language, which implies that people from the same language are supposed to understand each other, even if they use some different vocabularies. Naturally, it is impossible to identify a language that is spoken uniformly by all its speakers (Joswig, 2012:16). In fact, there are times where people feel that they speak the same language but have dialects where they use different vocabulary or structure and do not understand each other to a certain degree. Thus, a dialect can be taken as a minor difference in the same language in which speakers can understand each other in spite of the difference. To that end, almost all languages in the world have dialects. However, the level of understanding in different dialects of the same language

differs from dialect to dialect. So, it is not always easy to decide how well the speakers of different dialects understand each other (Joswig, 2012:17.)

### 3.7.2.2 Orthography

Orthography is a system for representing a language in written form (Cahill & Rice, 2014:2). The major goals of orthography development include variables such as literacy development, development of primers, teaching reading and writing, facilitating varieties of materials. Among the approximately 5000–6000 languages in the world, many of them have at some point been written for different purposes by linguists, scholars, or related discipline such as anthropologists, using one or the other phonetic transcription. However, only a smaller number of languages have had a practical alphabet which can be considered a system of writing or orthography which had been created for them.

In many instances, languages that have different dialects come up against the decision of which dialect to take for orthography development. One of the many solutions according to Cahill and Rice (2014:12) is that of designing an orthography that will serve all language groups, even one with fairly divergent dialects. They advise that this kind of decision will make it easier to produce materials than if each dialect has its own standard orthography. They note these two major approaches of single orthography for multiple dialects.

- A unilectal approach is an approach in which the most prestigious dialect is taken as a standard for orthography so that the other dialects will adapt to it. This approach has an advantage in such a way that once the dialect is chosen, then orthography developers can focus on that particular dialect without exerting effort on others.
- In the multilectal approach, the orthography will have elements of different dialects. This means that the orthography is not limited to or represent the speech of a single group. As Cahill and Rice (2008:10) points out the advantage of this approach can be more in an area where sociopolitical situations are sensitive in such a way that one group is not favoured.

Cahill and Rice (2008:10–12) argue that countries that have a number of languages have policies governing the orthographic development of their local languages. The

case in Ethiopia, however, seems different since the country has not developed such a governing policy.

### 3.7.2.3 Standardisation

In dealing with the use of minority languages for MTE, the need to discuss language standardisation remains imperative. Defining a language standard in many cases implies that one dialect is chosen out of several dialects of the language area. This may not be easy to accept for the speakers of the other language varieties. In that regard, dialect, orthography and standardisation are interrelated. Cahill and Rice (2014:9) argue that the acceptability of orthographies in newly written languages depend on non-linguistic factors as much as linguistic ones. The authors also contend that government policies are among these factors, although the sociolinguistic issues such as choice of which dialect to use as a standard is inevitable. Orthography development should consider educational issues such as teachability and readability of characters. An effective orthography, according to Cahill, involves being linguistically sound, acceptable to stakeholders, and usable.

According to Joswig (2012:17), a major component of language development is language standardisation. A language cannot hope to reach a satisfactory level of development if no agreed upon standards for using the language exists. The writer argues that a standard in this sense means that all speakers of the language community agree to use their language in a specific way. This only applies to written and oral communication which is intended to be used across the whole language area. Specific products for language standardisation are an approved orthography and a dictionary. He also argues that, once it is decided to use it in various public functions, every language needs to have a standard even if it does not have different dialects.

In general, for a language to serve as a Mol and/or as a subject, it needs to have a standard orthography, a descriptive grammar and a comprehensive dictionary as well as texts to read, i.e. written literature (Skattum & Brock-Utne, 2009:35). In this regard, schooling remains one of the most powerful institutions through which one can

demonstrate one's commitment to language maintenance and development (Djité, 2008:55)

### **3.8 LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION**

Heugh (2011:107) explains the fact that several international and continental high-level education meetings have focused on the importance of the mother tongue at the primary education level. For example, the Organisation for African Unity's Language Plan of Action for Africa, the Asmara Declaration of 2000 and others, have been accepted by many African states. These are among those who decided and advocated for the use of the first language or mother tongue in language of education, both as a Mol and as a subject of learning in schools. As a result, it seems that there is considerable effort being exerted by some African countries to change the scenario of using a colonial language as a language of education. In this regard, Ethiopia has gone a long way in using local languages as languages of instruction.

Mol refers to the language in which educational lessons are carried out in the classroom and the language in which educational materials are written. It is the language in which the classroom interactions between the teacher and the students take place. The Mol refers to the language used for teaching and learning in implementing the core curriculum of an educational system (Ball, 2011:1).

The choice of the language of instruction or Mol is part of the language and education policy of a country; it forms the part of language planning known as corpus planning and it requires a political decision. The educational policy may recommend the use of several languages of instruction. The choice of language of instruction is a recurrent challenge for policy makers since it is a crucial factor in the development of quality education. While some countries opt for one language of instruction, often the official or majority language, others have chosen to use educational strategies that give national or local languages an important place in schooling (Ballinger, Lyster, Sterzuk, & Genesee, 2017:49).

Children who do not speak a second language but are nevertheless taught in that second language, are clearly at a disadvantage in the education system. In many

African countries, the Mol remains the colonial language, that is English and French in most cases. Historically, according to Tollefson and Tusi (2010:3–4), the former national language of the colonial states was taken as an Mol by a small number of schools to be used by an exclusive group of indigenous communities so that these exclusive community members could join the elites in society as well as those who had power, wealth and status. These groups served as supporters and brokers who came between the colonisers and the colonised to motivate the community to show goodwill and loyalty to their colonisers. In some cases, the indigenous language of the colonised society was used as an Mol as an alternative or as a transitional Mol. Whatever the Mol used, the ultimate goal of education during colonisation was to subjugate and oppress the colonised. The policy of the colonisers was a policy of linguistics assimilation for political subjugation. This has deprived the minority language community of their right to use their mother tongue as an Mol in the formal education system.

The roles of an Mol include being a powerful means of maintaining and revitalising languages and culture as well as being fundamental to “integrational transmission” (Tollefson & Tusi, 2010:2). The authors note that Mol policy denotes the social, political and linguistics status of language groups. This means that the Mol reveals which language group has more economic, political and social power in society. Obviously, the society or language group whose language is used as a Mol will have greater economic, social and political benefits than other groups whose language is not given such an opportunity.

Though Ethiopia is a sub-Saharan country, the country has no history of colonial conquest, except the five years of Italian occupation during World War II. This means that there was no specific colonial Mol set for the country’s formal education. However, because of the introduction of modern education through western languages, mainly English, a perception of many community members still exists today that the only way to knowledge and modern education is through a western language, especially English. This perception emanates from the fact that from the introduction of modern education to the country in the 20th century, western languages were used. This perception resulted in creating a belief that indigenous languages were backward and uncivilised.

### **3.9 MOTHER-TONGUE INSTRUCTION AND TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALISATION**

Quality of education depends, among many other factors, on the quality of teachers. Adequate and proper primary teacher training results in qualified teachers (Zein, 2017:307). However primary schoolteachers in sub-Saharan countries are often not provided with adequate and effective training to teach the school curriculum. Dakhi and Fitria (2019:16) contend that, until recently, there were insufficient written materials that deal with how student teachers should carry out their professional tasks. Moreover, they explain that even though in-service teacher training programmes have had some impact on teachers' professional skill, there has not been much evidence to demonstrate that the preservice teacher educators have learned about their professional skills. In considering this fact, in relation to training teachers for MTB MLE, the problem seems to be getting worse. By the same token, a report by Gove and Cvelich (2011:15) explains that among several major factors contributing to the low reading achievements of children, a lack of proper training and support to mother-tongue teachers is one of the reasons.

Graham and Kelly (2018:5) explain the following:

Many teachers in developing countries have little-to-no training in teaching literacy and are often undereducated in general. According to UNESCO, over a quarter of all teachers in developing countries are not trained according to national standards (Education for All, 2014:6). Given the evidence that reading should be taught in a very specific way, this is an obvious problem.

By the same token, Mekonnen, Fesmire, Ramos-Mattoussi, Backman and Ramos-Mattoussi (2018: 23–58), explain that in Sub-Saharan African countries, primary teachers are not well trained to teach the school curriculum as they should. The authors have also stated that the provision of in-service training has been vital in giving better skill in the teaching and learning tasks.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:274) discuss the vitality of teachers' educational training at preservice and in-service education programmes. The authors contend that

teachers who have been trained through dominant language will suffer from a difficulty with knowledge of terminologies in their mother tongue.

According to Hadar and Brody (2016:51), the need for a professional development of teachers has been essential and has brought about changes in various aspects of teachers' knowledge, skills and behaviour in other regions. Similarly, Kioko et al. (2008:15) contend that the major factors that are decisive in contributing to successful MTE and MLE are the support and training offered to classroom teachers in addition to the preparation of well-designed curriculum and teaching materials. Accordingly, teaching in the mother tongue and the mother tongue as subject should not be done in the same way as teaching in an unfamiliar language. Trudell, Dowd, Piper and Bloch (2008:14) note that teachers need training in different approaches and must be fluent in reading and writing in the mother tongue. In other words, being a native speaker of the language is not enough to teach the mother tongue and instruct in the mother tongue. The very need for the change in attitude regarding MTE remains significant and thus teachers as well as the general school community must develop positive attitudes about the value of local language use in school.

The education and training policy of Ethiopia deals with the Mol that should be used at teacher training colleges for primary schoolteachers. It explains the need to use the mother tongue so that primary teachers training fits with and matches the Mol at primary level. The policy states: "The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area" (MoE, 1994:23).

In addition, the transformative pedagogy of Cummins (2000:246) that deals with classroom interaction between teacher and students consists of the teachers' knowledge and skill that fosters collaborative relations of power in classroom interaction enabling both teachers and students to relate curriculum content to their individual and collective experiences. This issue of transformative pedagogy is at the heart of MTB MLE in such a way that it deals with the significant role of the interaction between students and teachers in the classroom.

According to Cummins (2007:120), transformative pedagogy is a process which strongly considers students' identity and simultaneously develops their tools necessary for their linguistic and intellectual inquiry. Cummins further argues that teachers should encourage culturally diverse students to develop the language and culture they bring from home and build on their prior experience. Obviously, when teachers and culturally diverse parents become genuine partners in children's education, then schools and children will be effective in their academic achievement.

Among other factors regarding teachers' quality in general and about mother-tongue teachers' ability, knowledge and skills in particular, teachers' preparation in reading skills including topics, knowledge of the structure of the language such as phonology, orthography, morphology and syntax is fundamental.

Inadequate reading skills of teachers emanate from a lack of appropriate training in their respective colleges where training is offered in a different Mol instead of their respective mother tongue, according to the education and training policy of Ethiopia (MoE, 1994:23):

Teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education, will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction, through preservice and in-service training the language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area.

In spite of the policy saying this, many colleges of teacher education, with a few exceptions, have not yet been implementing this policy. Malone (2010:11) states that, among the challenges for implementing MLE programmes, the lack of mother-tongue teachers with teaching credentials has negatively impacted students' academic achievements. As children's achievement is related to teacher quality and efficacy, there is an urgent need to give appropriate training to teachers based on their subject specialisms.

According to a recently developed Ethiopian Education Development Road Map (MoE, 2018:39), the Mol in CTEs and Universities is English and graduate teachers struggle to teach subject matter which they studied in English in the mother-tongue of the students.



The situation could be exacerbated because some teacher trainees in CTEs may not be proficient in the mother tongue of the students.

Teachers' professional development calls for teachers to change both attitudes and behaviour. Fullan (2007:129) notes that "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and as complex as that". This notion deals with the change in attitude from the perspective of teachers in teaching their lessons in general. It is also in line with the change in attitude of mother-tongue teachers.

Finally, this topic is best concluded by Dekker (2010) who cites UNICEF (2009: Sec.2.9 – 2.10), as follows:

Marginalisation [of students] by teachers who fail to engage students in the learning and teaching process, not speak their language, do not believe they are capable of learning or do not have the pedagogical skills to handle the diversity these children bring to the classroom prevent them from having a quality learning experience. ... Mother-tongue instruction in the early grades and multilingual/multicultural Education [is] designed to ease the transition from home to school and render education more relevant to minority populations.

### **3.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the literature on MTB MLE. It included the theoretical framework and dealt with the importance of the mother tongue to facilitate children's learning. Language policy, orthography, dialect, standardisation and related issues were discussed. The significance and need to have well-trained primary teachers were also discussed. The various views of scholars were also discussed and the evidence to confirm these ideas was examined. Most importantly, each part of the research was related to the theoretical frameworks of social constructivism and the ZPD of Vygotsky and their ontological and epistemological stances.. The research questions of the study guided the literature discussed in this chapter.

The next chapter discusses the design and methodology employed in the study.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the research paradigm, methodology and the research approach of this study. It also discusses the design and the research instruments of the study. It indicates the sample sites as well as the number and types of participants involved in the study. It explicitly explains the instruments to be used and why the selected instruments are appropriate to this particular study based on the theoretical and philosophical assumptions of the methods and methodologies to be applied. The way the data is organised, analysed and interpreted and presented is also discussed in this chapter.

##### **4.1.1 Research Paradigm**

The research to be undertaken in this study takes an inductive approach which is typical when using a qualitative research paradigm. As Thomas (2006, cited in Cohen & Morrison, 2018:645) indicates, the process of qualitative data analysis is typically inductive. Every research paradigm whether it is deductive or inductive falls under one of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions of positivism, interpretivism or social constructivism, postmodernism or pragmatism. To that end, this study is based on the social constructivist theoretical framework which is also called an interpretive framework by many scholars, including Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Mateus (2010, cited in Creswell, 2013:20–21). Within this context, according to the social constructivists' ontological assumptions, reality is the result of the interaction of individuals with the society and the environment. In other words, they claim that reality exists in the individual as a result of his or her interaction with others. In general, the social constructivists' ontological belief is that reality is the result of constructed meanings of interactions and experiences with others (Creswell, 2013:36–37).

Regarding the epistemological view, a view that deals with how knowledge is acquired, the social constructivists or interpretivists contend that knowledge and the meaning of

things and their situations are constructed and obtained through the interaction and experience that takes place among individuals and within a society. In relation to these philosophical assumptions and theoretical paradigms, the study makes use of the qualitative methods as its methodological consideration which is a social constructivist/interpretivist theoretical framework.

One major feature of interpretivists is that they examine the meaning of a phenomenon according to people's everyday settings. Interpretivists stipulate that people's everyday activity is a means to build the society. As an illustration of this feature, they refer to the role of an educational system of a society in which the contribution of teachers, learners, education administrators, inspectors and other educational experts play a role to come up with a vital outcome of producing educated citizens (O'Donoghue, 2007:17). With this interpretivist view in mind, this study investigated the actions being performed by and the perceptions the stakeholders have about MTB MLE by means of in-depth individual interviews and FGDs.

The fact that the social constructivists' research relies on the participants' views, perception and experiences of the situation (Creswell, 2013:24), this research is designed within the qualitative research paradigm. It takes an exploratory perspective to systematically describe the phenomena of the MTB MLE programme in selected minority language areas in Ethiopia with special reference to the southern regional state known as the Southern Nation and Nationality Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) which is one of the bigger regions consisting of the greatest number of minority languages in the country. Its aim is to investigate the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and views of various education practitioners and community members and thereby to explore the effectiveness of the implementation of the MTB MLE programme in the minority language scenario in particular. The study also tries to investigate how teachers feel about their professional capacity of being teachers who teach in the mother tongue and the mother tongue as a subject with regard to their skills and knowledge of the orthography of the language they are teaching. It also looks into the multilingual education professional capacity of mother-tongue teacher educators at colleges of teacher education in which the primary schoolteachers of the minority language areas

are trained in general and those who train the teachers of the sample areas in particular. The Federal MoE mother-tongue experts and the director of the Mother Tongue and Language Development Directorate were also interviewed to look into the strategy used in the programme and the implementation part of the programme which was the phenomenon to be investigated.

#### **4.1.2 Qualitative Research**

A qualitative research method deals with the social science field of studies such as sociology, psychology, anthropology education and health disciplines. Savin-Baden and Major (2013:11) contend that qualitative research is simply social research that aims mainly at investigating the way in which people feel and make sense of their ideas and experiences. A qualitative research method looks into the meaning of social issues as practised by the people involved in a particular social interaction. It gives importance to the subjective views of participants. The personal values of the researcher that are relevant to the findings are also acknowledged in a qualitative study. To that end, I will attempt to investigate MTB MLE as one of the main social issues of the Ethiopian education system with special focus of the minority language areas mentioned above. The study applies the phenomenological approach which is an interpretivists approach that deals with social phenomena.

To be more explicit why a qualitative method is applied in this study, it would be important to take note of some purposes and definition of qualitative study in relation to what is going to be accomplished in this particular study.

Peshkin (1993, cited in Leedy & Ellis, 2013:140) dealing with the purpose of qualitative study, notes the following as the major purposes:

- Description: in this purpose of qualitative study, a multifaceted nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems are depicted.
- Interpretation: this purpose serves to enable a researcher not only to gain insight about a particular phenomenon but also to develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, as well as to discover problems that exist within the phenomenon.

- Verification: verification allows a researcher to test the validity of certain assumption, claims, theories or generalisations within the real world.
- Evaluation: this is a purpose that provides a means by which the researcher judges the implementation and effectiveness of particular policies, experiences and innovations.

Among these major purposes of qualitative research, in this particular study, I looked into the two of the above purposes i.e. the interpretation and the evaluation purposes by investigating the phenomenon and discovering the problems that exist in the MTB MLE in primary schools of minority language areas. My intention was to explore the views and perceptions of various stakeholders in relation to the impact and effectiveness the programme brought about through the implementation framework accomplished so far.

Pertinent to this study, it will also be essential to take note of the definition of qualitative research by Creswell (2013. 44) that explains the design of qualitative research in some detail.

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiring, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establish patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change.

This definition as well as each and every step including the procedures, techniques of data collections and interpretation discussed in the definition, relates to this study in particular.

Strauss and Corbin (2015:5) list the main reasons to explain why qualitative research method should be chosen and is better than other methods.

- To explore the inner experiences of participants

- To explore how meanings are formed and transformed
- To explore areas not yet thoroughly researched
- To take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of a phenomena

The study deals with a major field of social science which is education and it aligns with the social and political realities and knowledge gained thorough them, by making use of a qualitative method of research. According to Braun and Clarke (2013:21), the purpose of any qualitative research is to explore, describe, understand or explain a situation. In line with this, my purpose in carrying out this research is mainly to explore and describe “how” and “what” has been done in the past few years regarding MTB MLE in minority language areas of the SNNPRS in Ethiopia and thereby also to identify the challenges encountered by stakeholders in the education system.

Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005:2) argue that qualitative research aims to elicit the contextualised nature of experiences and action and attempts to come up with an analysis that is ‘thick’ and integrated. Qualitative research approaches have two major things: firstly, they all focus on natural setting of phenomena, and secondly, they deal with capturing and studying the complexity of that particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ellis, 2013:139).

In this regard, as a researcher of this study, I planned to carry out an in-depth investigation of how the MTB MLE implementation has been taking place and what drawbacks have been encountered in some selected minority languages. In doing this, various practitioners including experts of MTE in the MoE, curriculum experts, mother-tongue Mol teachers, instructors (educators) of mother-tongue teachers in colleges of teacher education and representatives of the community such as parents of the sample areas were included as participants of this study.

## **4.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH**

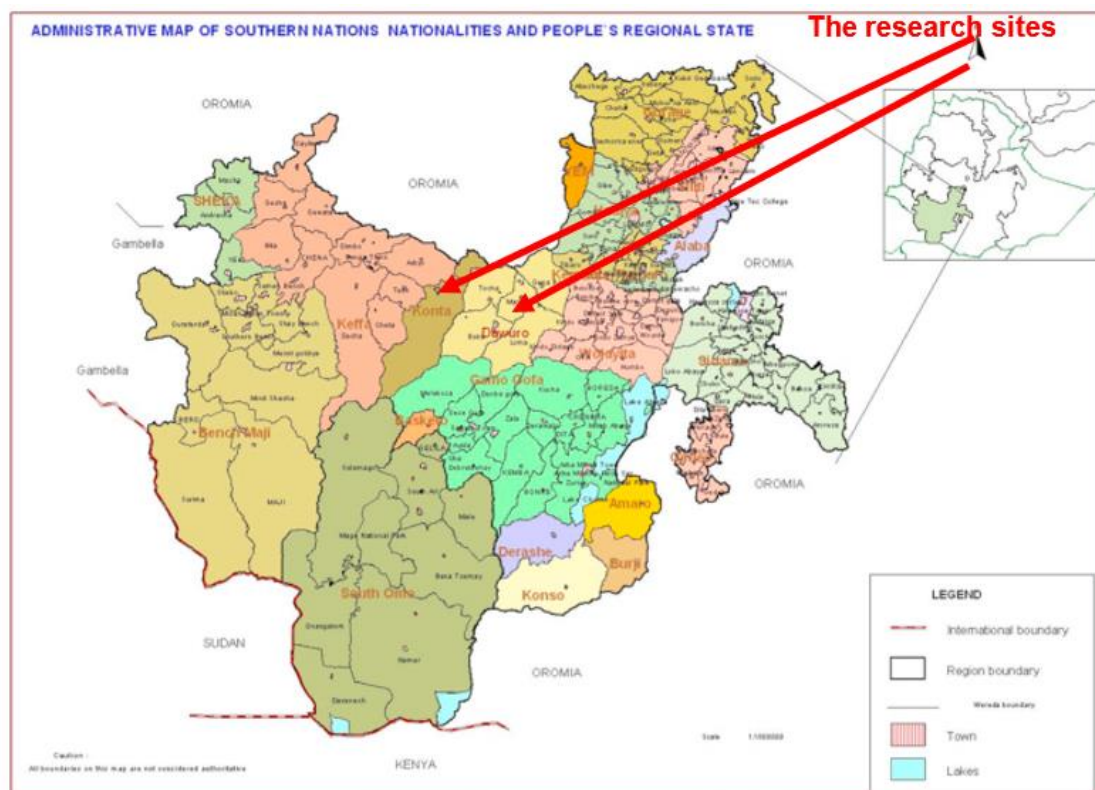
The study has been linked to a phenomenological research approach which is one of the approaches of qualitative research method. The theoretical notion of phenomenology deals with the assumption of the existence of multiple realities which are socially constructed and it emphasises the social, political and historical contexts

that are capable of influencing people's experience in addition to the meanings they create (Lodico et al., 2010:150). Denscombe (2010:93) also argues that phenomenology has been used as a term that is used in research that does not use measurements, statistics or processes associated with scientific methods. It is seen as an approach which relies on subjectivity more than on objectivity, description more than analysis, interpretation rather than measurement, and agency rather than structure. It is an approach that focuses on individuals' views and experiences. A phenomenological study attempts to examine and understand the perceptions, perspectives and views of individuals or groups. The data is collected through in-depth and multiple interviews with individuals or groups that have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013:81). Since this study aims at looking into people's perception, experience and understanding of MTB MLE in minority language areas, the application of the phenomenological approach suits its purpose. Because a phenomenological study depends mainly on in-depth interviews with carefully selected participants, I selected participants from various social groups. According to Christensen, Johnson and Turner (2015:251), phenomenological research is different from other types and methods of qualitative inquiry in that it attempts to understand the essence of a phenomenon from the perspective of participants who have experienced it. In this regard, the focus, then, in this kind of research approach is not on the participants themselves or the world that they inhabit, but rather on the meaning or essence of the interrelationship between the two. The phenomenological research approach attempts to uncover what several participants who experience a phenomenon have in common. This very idea of uncovering the perceptions and experiences of several participants with MTB MLE as a phenomenon is the purpose of this study.

#### **4.3 THE RESEARCH SITES**

A research site is a place or space of the topic under study where not only knowledge is uncovered but is also a critical part of what is under study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:164). In the qualitative research method using a case study approach, research sites can be single, multiple or virtual. For this study, the major sites were two minority language community areas of SNNPRS known as Dawuro and Kontta (See Figure 3.4

overleaf). Both language groups are from Omotic language family (section 2.2 and section 4.3.3). There were three main reasons for selecting these sites. Firstly, these two areas are minority language areas that represent many other languages that were equally underserved for many years during the previous regimes. Secondly, the two language areas have been running MTB MLE since 2003 in primary schools in their respective areas. Thirdly, these languages are among those minority languages in which orthography development has recently taken place. Unlike some other minority language areas where the local languages are used only as a subject, the schools in the two study sites run MTB MLE using mother tongue as an Mol for all school subjects in the firmary schools of Grades 1–4. Having selected the specific research sites



mentioned above, the study involved a heterogeneous sample of participants drawn from federal level MoE departments, College of Education Instructors, School Directors, Mother tongue teachers and parents of children at schools.

Figure 3.4: Map of SNNPR showing the study sites

Source: (adapted from Warren & Frongillo, 2017)



The SNNPRS is one of the nine regional states of Ethiopia. As the name indicates, the region is located in the south and south west part of the country neighbouring Kenya in the south, Sudan, in south west, Gambella regional state in the north west, and Oromiya Regional State in the east and north east. The region is the third largest of the nine regional state next to Oromiya and Amhara with a population of 20,7 million as of May 2018 (Adugna, 2018). SNNPRS is a region in which a majority of the local minority languages of the country from different language family are found. There are 56 local languages among which 42.8% are Omotic, 37.5% Cushitic, 16.1% Nilo-Saharan and 3.6% Semitic. The region is known for having the highest number of local minority languages which comprises about 67% of the overall local languages of the country.

Historically, almost all of these languages had not been given equal status as those languages of some other regions such as Amharic. Almost all languages were used only for oral communications in their respective areas. The regional state is divided into 14 zonal administration and special districts according to the linguistic and geographical distribution of the language community. This study focuses on one of these zonal administrative language community called Dawuro and another neighbouring special district language community called Kontta.

#### **4.3.1 The Dawuro Research Site**

Dawuro as mentioned above is one of the 14 zonal administrations of SNNPR. The zone has a total size of 4 436.70 km. square with in which 617 894 total populations is found. In this particular zone there are 21 kindergarten schools, 105, first cycle primary schools (Grades 1–4), 212 second cycle primary schools (Grades 5–8), 26 secondary schools (Grades 9–10), 12 preparatory/ second cycle high schools (Grades 11–12). Dawuro is the name of the community and the name of the language as well. The language is also called “Dawuro-Kalla”. This language community lives in five sub-districts though there are language community members who live in neighbouring regions and zones mainly in the nearby Oromiya Regional State zone called “Jimma”. The Dawuro language community is obviously surrounded by other significant language groups that have mutually-intelligibility status with the Dawuro language. Accordingly, the neighbouring languages known as Gamoo, Goffaa, Wolayetta and Kononta

languages are the various languages in which the speakers of each language can communicate with each other without difficulty. The Dawuro language has been used as an Mol at primary school and as a subject in second cycle primary school after having developed an orthography since 1994. The Dawuro language community has opted to use the Latin script for their writing system.

#### **4.3.2 The Kontta Research Site**

Kontaatho is the name of the language of the community of Kontta (Shinn & Ofcansk, 2013:251) which is the other area of interest of this study. The Kontta special district (Liyu wereda – a lower level of administration than Zone) is the name of the area as well as that of the language community. It has an area of 21,9 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of approximately 92 000. Kontta has neighbouring language communities that speak almost similar languages. These are Dawuro in the North East, Gamo and Goffa in South West as well as Wolayeta in the West. There is one kindergarten and there are 57 first cycle and second cycle primary schools. From 1997, the Kontaatho language has been used as the Mol in primary school of Grades 1–4 using a Latin script. In the effort to promote and develop the language as a language of literature and education, various proverbs of the language have been collected and translated into English. A Kontaatho grammar book has also been prepared with the help of the Hawassa University and the House of Representatives of the SNNPRS.

#### **4.3.3 A Brief Review of a Politico-Linguistics Situation of South Omo Languages**

The languages of this research site and their neighbouring languages are from the Omotic language family. The orthography development and the significant change of the languages from only oral usage to written form is also recent having been implemented only about 20 years ago. The administrative map of these Omotic languages of the area has been changing under the different political regimes of the country in general (Dea, 2010:118-120). According to Dea, at the end of Emperor Haile Selassie's regime, the Omotic-speaking language community was clustered under three different administrative provinces – Kaffa, Sidamo, and Gamo-Gofa. This administrative structure was changed during the socialist Derg regime and these language groups

were clustered under North Omo, South Omo and Kaffa administrative provinces. The name Omotic seems to have been derived from the name of a river known as the Omo River which crosses and surrounds the language areas.

In the leadership of the EFDR government that took power in 1991, the administrative structure of the country was based on ethnolinguistic lines (Dea, 2010:118). To that end, in 1992, when the SNNPRS regional government was reestablished, all the Omotic languages were restructured as North Omo, South Omo, Kaffa-Shekka and Bench-Maji zones and special weredas (sub-districts). The two languages which are the focus of this research were clustered under north Omotic language, i.e., Dawuro in the Dawuro administrative zone and Kontaatho in the Kontta special wereda.

Because the EFDR constitution allows language groups and regional states to decide which languages to use, and since the SNNPRS constitutes 56 local languages, it seems that it has been difficult to choose one single language as a working language of the region. Thus, the region decided on using Amharic as the working language of the regional government while other languages can be used at a zonal level based on the decision of the respective language community.

Article 5 of the EFDR constitution reads as follow regarding the use local languages in the country.

“All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state of recognition”

“Amharic shall be the working language in the federal government”

“Members of the federation may by law determine their respective work languages” (EFDR, 1991: Article 5).

Before the split into separate zones, each of the North Omo language groups was structured under a single zonal administration, North Omo, comprising, Wolayetta, Gamo, Gofa, Dawuro, and Kontta. Linguistically, these languages are mutually intelligible. As a result of this, the languages were named as WGAGODA where W stands for Wolyittata, GA for Gamo, GO for Gofa and DA for Dawuro. However, this mixture of languages to be used as one language in schools did not survive. The issue that began as an issue of differences in dialects turned out to be highly political and led

to the death of many people and loss of considerable property including schoolbooks and documents. The bloody conflict that took place within the language groups resulted in enmity within the language community for a while (Dea, 2005:142). However, the conflict was brought under control in a short period of time with the cooperation of society and the government.

## **4.4 SAMPLING**

### **4.4.1 Purposive Sampling**

The aim of sampling is to select a few participants from the identified population who can provide the information a researcher needs. Unlike the quantitative research paradigm, in qualitative research, sampling involves using a small sample rather than a representative cross-section of the population (Denscombe, 2010:25). The purpose of sampling in qualitative and quantitative research is different as the purpose of the former is to gain in-depth knowledge about the situation, event and phenomenon or to know as much as possible about different aspects of individuals, and the purpose of sampling in the latter is to draw inferences about the group from which a sample is selected (Kumar, 2011:192). Therefore, the sampling technique and the sample size differs accordingly.

A qualitative study like this one generally uses purposeful sampling in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately so as to obtain the needed information that cannot be obtained from other sources (Creswell, 2013:155-156; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:314). This requires selecting the appropriate or the 'right' people for a particular case from a known reservoir of cases (Braun & Clarke, 2013:56; Flick, 2007:30). The study lends itself to maximum variation sampling in selecting different participants who are from different social groups so as to obtain a variety of perspectives (Lodico et al., 2010:165).

According to Creswell (2013:155), in purposive sampling, there should be two major issues to consider.

- **Participants in the sample:** this consideration refers to whom to sample and what criteria to consider. Issues such as the availability of the persons and political importance in attracting attention or for being marginalised need to be considered. In this regard, I gave due consideration to these features of purposive sampling.
- **Types of sampling:** It refers to what form of sampling to be considered and making the sampling consistent to one of the five research approaches: narrative research, grounded theory research, case study research, ethnography research, phenomenology research. The research approach was phenomenological and was thus aligned to the sampling and data-collection instruments used in qualitative research. As Creswell (2013:78) suggests, phenomenological qualitative research tends to explore the phenomenon with the group of individuals who have experienced it.

Denscombe (2010:35) agrees that the selection of the participants depends on two basic principles, namely, relevance to the issue and knowledge of the issue the participants have. The other important issue that relates to this study is that purposive sampling relies on the knowledge of the researcher about the participants and the event under the study (ibid.). As a researcher of this particular topic, I have many years of experience in working in the education sector specifically as a language teacher, language curriculum developer and national language examinations item developer, as well as an expert in multilingual education. This helped me to select the appropriate participants for the study.

#### **4.4.2 Sample Selection**

The sample selection includes the number of research sites and research participants which is equally important to the sample type and the type of participants in the sample. Literature indicates that there is no rule for a sample size in qualitative research though sample size is an important consideration. Researchers are advised to consider what is called “saturation” rather than limiting the sample size at the outset. Saturation refers to the redundancy of information where no new information is obtained from respondents after a particular stage in the interviews. In my research, I decided on the number and sources of data from the beginning. As the research was in progress, I also applied the

principle of saturation since some of the data were redundant and did not yield any new information.

I took two of the minority language areas, namely, the Dawuro minority ethnolinguistic group and the Kontta minority ethnolinguistic group and sampled primary schools in these areas. These were five schools from Dawuro and three schools from Kontta based on the number of schools in each area. Though there are no rules in qualitative data for a sample size, a sample size of about 15 to 30 individual interviews tends to be common. I included three instructors from the nearby CTE who were specifically assigned to train the primary schoolteachers of the two linguistic minority areas. In addition, 32 mother-tongue teachers at the eight sampled primary schools were taken as a sample. Furthermore, at the federal level, four MoE mother-tongue experts as well as curriculum experts who are assumed to be policy implementers were invited to individual interviews.

In addition, heterogenous FGDs were conducted in both Dawuro and Kontta primary schools where two of the FGDs were in Dawuro and one in Kontta area. The FGD comprised of the parents' representatives, community leaders, school administrators, teachers' representatives as well as students' representatives. This composition according to the government's policy is also known as the Parent, Teacher, Student Association which is heterogeneous by its nature. This means that, this study included research participants from all relevant sections of the education arena for in-depth interviews and FGDs.

Table 4.1 below shows the participants from different sources who participated in the individual interviews and in the FGDs.

Table 4.1: Profile of participants

<b>The workplace of the participants</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Positions of the participants</b>	<b>Type of data</b>
MoE	4	MTE experts and curriculum experts	Interview
Mother-tongue instructors of CTE	3	College instructors	Interview
Mother-tongue teachers	32	Mother-Tongue Mol primary schoolteachers	Interview

<b>The workplace of the participants</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Positions of the participants</b>	<b>Type of data</b>
Education school Administrators, community members, parents, and representatives of teachers	6-8 in each of the three groups in three schools.	Education professionals of district (wereda) level, community members, parents, and teachers	Focus group

#### **4.5 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Research techniques differ according to the type of the method or methods used in the study involved. The qualitative research method lends itself to multiple techniques, instruments and data-collection procedures in any single study (Leedy & Ellis, 2013:151). One of the major differences between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms is the techniques used in the selection of participants and in the procedure of data-collection instruments. The techniques of qualitative data differ from that of the quantitative in such a way that the major qualitative data instruments are interviews, FGDs, observation and document analysis which makes qualitative study more flexible than the quantitative one. The quality of the data-collection process in qualitative methods can be divided conceptually into the quality of instruments and the quality of data obtained from the instrument.

As Creswell (2009:347) indicates, among the advantages of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that it offers the participants freedom to respond to open-ended questions in their own words which makes them flexible in their responses. It does not force them to focus only on fixed responses required when using quantitative methods.

A qualitative data-gathering technique invites participants to answer open-ended questions that will encourage them to be able to come up with culturally and psycho-socially appropriate and meaningful views and opinions. Qualitative research techniques also have the advantage of allowing the researcher to be flexible in exploring initial participant responses by asking ‘why’ or ‘how’ questions. Therefore, it calls for the researcher’s attention and careful listening to each and every response of the participants to maintain accuracy, confidence and credibility of the findings and also by using triangulation.

A qualitative research method does not depend on the use of numbers and mathematically calculated data since data about individuals' perception, beliefs, and experiences are very complex and cannot be judged by quantifying and using statistically organised numbers.

Thus, in this particular study, I used the major instruments of qualitative data collection, namely, in-depth interviews and FGDs that use open-ended questions so that the participants can make use of their experiences and perceptions to inform me as a researcher about their perceptions and views regarding the challenges of the ongoing MTB MLE implementation practices in the minority language areas and the strategy and plans used to implement the programme. The study also presented the reality the various respondents experienced in the implementation of MTB MLE in their areas.

#### **4.5.1 The Interview**

Interviews are the most common instruments used in qualitative research. The basic subject matter in interview is the interpretation of participants of the phenomena under discussion. Interviews enable researchers to gain complex in-depth information from participants (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:358). According to a definition given by Marshall and Rossman (2011:145), an interview is literally an 'inter-view', i.e. an interchange of views between two persons. Denscombe (2010:172) differentiates between an interview and a conversation arguing that though interviewing requires the ability to manage conversations, it can actually be something more than conversation in such a way that interviews involve a set of overall assumptions and deep understanding of certain phenomena or situations rather than a mere discussion of something.

This means that an interview is a dialogue between two people to deeply discuss and diagnose an outlook or view about certain social, political or educational issues. It is a technique through which genuine and factual information is collected from the interviewee involved.

One of the most important aspects of an interviewer's approach is capturing the attitudes that the participants convey as attitudes are valuable and useful in analysing the data. The genuine nature of the interview also depends on both partners and their



willingness to engage in a deep discussion about the topic of interest. Obviously, this kind of discussion can be deep and broad and sometimes challenging. As Schostak (2006, cited in Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:358) notes:

The interview is not a simple tool with which to mine information. It is a place where views may clash, deceive, seduce, enhance. It is the inter-view. It is as much about seeing the world – mine, yours, ours, theirs – as about hearing accounts, opinions, arguments, reasons, declarations: words with views into different worlds.

This idea was of great importance to me as the researcher of this study. Because the participants in the study were heterogeneous groups drawn from different levels of understandings and views, as well as different educational backgrounds and experience, their opinions and outlooks could be varied and divergent. I thus took into consideration all the relevant ideas raised and attempted to harmonise the differences accordingly.

#### 4.5.1.1 Types of interview used in the study

Interviews are divided into three types, namely, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. The structured interview consists of a predetermined set of questions in which a specific order of questions is used in the interview while the semi-structured interview uses predetermined questions but there is some flexibility in the interview schedule (Lodico et al., 2010:124). The interviewer can change the order of the interview questions or add or change the question depending on the responses given by the participant. This is done in order to probe deeper if an issue is not clear to the researcher.

The type of interview employed in this study with the aim of getting explicitly stated perceptions, views, and opinions of the participants was the semi-structured in-depth interview (Appendix K–M). As the interviewer and researcher of this study, I applied the responsive interview style that Rubin and Rubin (2012, cited in Flick, 2014:208) explain. They state that a responsive interviewing style deals with the building of rapport and relationship between the interviewee and interviewer (researcher) that would create trust by using a friendly and gentle manner with little or no confrontation. The

responsive interviewing style also uses a flexible questioning approach based on the responses of the interviewee which may lead to new questions to further explore the experience and knowledge of the interviewee. When I started planning the type of instrument to use, I had planned to do unstructured interviews; however, the findings of the pilot study I did changed my plan to using semi-structured interviews. The reasons are discussed in section 5.2.

#### **4.5.2 Focus Groups Discussions**

According to Khan and Manderson (1992, cited in Liangputtong & Ezzy, 2005:76), an FGD in qualitative research aims at describing and understanding perceptions, interpretation and beliefs of selected groups. The goal of an FGD is to elicit understandings and feelings and explore the perception and experiences of small groups of people who have some common basis. In conducting FGDs, both homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings have their advantages and disadvantages. This study used heterogeneous focus groups and discussions with group members drawn from parents, school administrators, representatives of teachers and representatives of students of two sample schools i.e. one focus group from Kontta sample schools and other two from Dawuro sample schools. The focus group discussion questions are found in Appendix N. The number of the participants in each of the three focus groups was between six to eight. Denscombe (2010:177) argues that the number of participants in one FGD should be between six and nine. In this research, I decided to have not more than eight participants in each of the three FGDs. The study made use of the three distinctive features that Denscombe mentions. These are:

- The session should have a discussion based on items or experiences about which all participants have similar knowledge and understanding.
- Particular emphasis is placed on interaction within the group as a means of eliciting information.
- A moderator takes the role of facilitation, rather than leading the discussion.

At the outset, I intended to conduct FGDs with teacher trainers as well. However, during the pilot study I conducted, I realised that they were not at ease with the explanation

that the FGD brings different people together. Thus, I changed the FGDs with teacher educators to individual interviews so that participants would be in a relaxed position to share their perspectives. I discuss this issue in section 5.2 on the pilot study in the next chapter.

#### **4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is a term mainly used in qualitative research and is determined by four indicators called: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Kumar, 2011:184)

Credibility is a synonym for validity in quantitative research and refers to the results of qualitative research being believable and acceptable by the participants through validation and approval of the findings. To maintain credibility of this research and the data collected, after the task of transcribing the audio-recorded information from the participants was finalised, for both the in-depth interview and the FGDs, I arranged a meeting with each of the participants so as to make sure what had been transcribed reflected their own words and explanations. This technique is called member-checking. This follow-up session with the participants also helped me to improve and correct the data (Candela, 2019: 619).

Transferability refers to the degree of the results of qualitative research that can be generalised to other contexts or settings (Kumar, 2011:185). Because the level and understanding of minority languages all over the country differs considerably for different reasons such as economic status, education levels, and the status of the languages, this study might not meet the transferability principle. However, taking MTB MLE as a relatively recent phenomenon in minority language areas, some of the major findings can be generalised.

Dependability, as Kumar (2011:185) explains, is similar to the concept of reliability in quantitative research in such a way that it calls for the same result if the instrument is used twice. One of the justifications to make sure whether the research and its findings are reliable is through testing the instruments by conducting a pilot study. To that end, I conducted a pilot study (section 5.2) with regional education experts, teachers and

teacher educators who were found in different localities that had a similar level of language status as the sample sites. I have also had a short meeting with one of the MoE department heads in which I was able to raise some interview questions and get considerable inputs (Section 5.2). As a result, most of interview and focus group questions ensured that I would be able to obtain the necessary reliable information that would answer the major and the sub-research questions.

Confidentiality is one of the means through which participants' right to privacy will be maintained. It refers to a principle in which the participant's information will not be disclosed by identifying the respondent. Although researchers know or can identify who has given certain information, they do not pass it to others by exposing the participants (Cohen & Morrison, 2018:130).

Having these principles of trustworthiness in mind, I ensured that the data-collection instruments would meet these indicators of trustworthiness.

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis is one of the core issues in any type of research design. It is a phase where the information gathered is given due meaning and interpretation through different techniques. In qualitative research, the data collected through interviews, and FGDs were addressed using various strategies and methods of analysis and interpretation of data is at the core of qualitative data.

... without interpretation, we cannot make sense of our data. As qualitative researchers, we aim to find out more about people's experiences, their thoughts, feelings and social practices. To achieve this aim, we need to ask questions about their meaning and significance; we need to make connections between different components and aspects of the data in order to increase our understanding, In other words, we need to make the data meaningful through process of interpretation (Flick, 2014: 375-376).

As explained, data analysis and data interpretation are the core of qualitative research as it brings meaning to the data collected. In this study, the recorded data collected through interview and FGDs were personally transcribed by me in the language in which the interviews and the FGDs were conducted without attaching any names to the

transcripts to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. Obviously, the language that was used commonly was Amharic language which all participants were able to use it fluently since it is the lingua franca of the country and also the federal working language of Ethiopia. The Amharic transcriptions were then translated into English by a contracted English language teacher and I reviewed them for accuracy of the meanings. The English versions were given to other English language native speakers for editing. The transcribed data were organised into themes for analysis and interpretation using thematic analysis.

Cohen and Morrison (2018:661) suggest ten ways of organising, interpreting and presenting data analysis, namely by:

- groups of people
- individual people
- themes
- research questions
- data-collection instruments
- case study of the studies
- narratives
- events
- time sequence and time frame
- theoretical perspective

Accordingly, I decided to organise, analyse and present the data of this study using groups of people, themes and research questions. The reasons for choosing these are the following;

- My research participants were from different groups of society: policy implementers, teachers, community members and education administrators. Therefore, the analysis was done accordingly.
- Themes were generated from the individual interview and the FGD after transcription of data from audio-recorded responses was undergone. The coding and categorising

process and procedures were also done. The transcribed Amharic language responses were translated into English.

- The interview and focus group questions were different, and they address different research questions. For example, the research question that dealt with principles, models and strategies of MTB MLE were not discussed with parents and community members as they are not familiar with pedagogical issues like these. This made some of the research questions specific to different groups of participants. As a result, the data analysis was based on the different research questions and different type of participants.

#### **4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RELATED ISSUES**

Informed consent is one of the means of obtaining credible and dependable information from participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the UNISA Ethics Committee (Appendix A) (Ref 2017/06/14/57633657/17/MC) and the authorities in Ethiopia were approached and gave their permission for the study to be conducted in their areas (Appendix C1–E). In line with this, each participant was approached, and all the details of the study were explicitly explained (Appendix F–J). The information sheet from UNISA College of Education was adapted to fit the level and status of each participants of the study. It was translated into Amharic which is the federal working language of the country so that they would clearly understand it. Accordingly, almost all those invited to participate agreed and signed the letter of consent before the interview and the FGD.

#### **4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the method and methodology that was used to carry out the study was explicitly discussed. The research approach and its paradigm were discussed. The sampling, the area of the study and the reason to select the study area was explained. The sample areas and the sample size, the type instruments to conduct the study, the number of participants in both the individual interviews and the FGDs were indicated. To that end, the chapter has shown the design and structure of the study as clearly as possible. The next chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the data collected through individual interviews and FGDs with various participants are presented. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with experts from the MoE, instructors from a College of Teacher Education (CTE) and schoolteachers of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) in selected minority language areas of the SNNPRS in Ethiopia. Moreover, heterogeneous FGDs in which community leaders, parents, school directors, teachers' representatives, as well as students' representatives participated, were conducted. The interviews and the FGDs were semi-structured to allow for responses providing additional information from the participants. Each of the interviews took 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on the interest in the discussion points. The heterogeneous FGDs took up a maximum of 1½ hours and minimum of 55 minutes. The findings are discussed under eight themes. Before starting the presentation of the findings, the pilot study is described.

#### **5.2 THE PILOT STUDY AND LESSONS OBTAINED**

The importance of pilot study before the actual study takes place is vital. It helps to improve and validate the instruments of the data collection. A pilot study is one of the means of determining trustworthiness and credibility in a qualitative research study. Furthermore, it helps the researcher to learn and to properly manage and handle the process and procedures of conducting interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher can acquaint himself with the various questions and how to deal with them. As Lodico et al. (2010:27) explain, a pilot test is a kind of “dress rehearsal”. In the same vein, Creswell (2013:165) points out that pilot tests are a means of refining interviews.

After developing an interview guide for both in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion, I went out to areas which are similar to the areas where the main study took place in SNNPRS. To that end, a focus group discussion was conducted in two teacher education colleges with mother-tongue teacher educators. In-depth interviews were also

conducted with primary school mother-tongue medium teachers as well as a single expert in the Ministry of Education. Another focus group discussion and individual interviews were held with Regional Education Bureau (REB) experts, respectively.

The following paragraphs briefly explain the process, the procedures and lessons obtained from the pilot study.

### 5.2.1 Preparation for the Pilot Study

First, I had to obtain two types of letters of support and permission from UNISA regional office at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. One of the letters contained a direct address to the institute or organisation where the participants were serving as employees. The other letter was addressed as a general letter with a title of “To whom it may concern” to inform participants that I had been permitted to conduct research and request support related to the study.

I then translated the interview and the FGD guides into Amharic which is the federal working language of the country and a language almost all participants understand and make use of. I also had to ensure that I had a reliable audio recorder to record the responses from the interview and FGD sessions. I also prepared an i-Pod tablet to copy the audio-responses of the interview from the audio recorder in case the recorder ran out of memory before he completed the pilot study. Table 4.1 shows the number of participants for the pilot and the place from where they were drawn. The participants were given codes to maintain their anonymity.

Table 5.1: Sources of data for the pilot study

Instrument	Sources of Data	Number of participants			Location
		M	F	T	
Interview	Primary school mother-tongue teachers	-----	4	4	A single school nearby Arbaminch town
	Ministry of Education	-----	1	----	An expert at MOE
Focus Group Discussion	REB (Regional Education Bureau)	2	1	3	SNNPRS education bureau-Hawassa
	CTEs	7	2	9	In 2 Education Colleges-: Hawassa CTE and Arbaminch CTE



### **5.2.2 Focus Group Discussion with College Instructors and Mother-Tongue Experts**

The first focus group was conducted in a CTE at Hawassa, capital of the SNNPRS. It was a focus group discussion with five mother-tongue teacher trainers who had English Language teaching experience before being assigned as mother-tongue teacher trainers.

The second FGD was in the REB with four experts who worked as mother-tongue experts, a coordinator and a team leader. The participants in the REB were contacted as a result of my telephone conversations with people to whom I was previously introduced through a working relationship and partnership my organisation had with the REB.

Both FGDs were held on the same day, the first in the morning and the second in the afternoon of 5 December 2017. In both FGDs, all the participants contributed freely and gave valuable input by reflecting on the eight questions which were designed to be open-ended. The FGD at the CTE in Hawassa was coordinated by my friend who studies at UNISA in the Department of Educational Leadership.

The third FGD was conducted at Arbaminch, a town near the main sample site of my study. The FGD was coordinated by a mother-tongue teacher trainer to whom I was introduced by another friend. The FGD was held on 11 December 2017 at the college. All the participants explained that they had been training mother-tongue teachers for more than five years. Like those in Hawassa, many of them were English language graduates who used to teach English language in high schools and had experience in teaching English as their background. The CTE in the town serves as an institute of teacher training for all the neighbouring areas, including the sample area of this particular study. The participants were passionate and enthusiastic in being assigned as mother-tongue teachers since the language they were assigned to teach was their native language.

### 5.2.3 Lessons learnt from the FGD

The following are the lessons learnt from the three homogenous FGD data collection sessions conducted.

- Each participant took more than the time expected while they were responding to a single issue in the question. As a result, each FGD took more than 2-2:30 hours to finalise the discussion since participants spoke at length about their experiences.
- I understood that, since some of the issues raised as the discussion continued were politically sensitive especially regarding the support offered from the government to promote mother-tongue education and to maintain equity according to the policy in place, there was a reluctance among the participants to explain what they perceived.

Excerpts from one of the discussions in Hawassa CTE are presented below. The Amharic dialogue was translated into English after being transcribed.

**Interviewer:** *How do you evaluate the government in implementing the mother-tongue policy that says: “Making the necessary preparation, nations and nationalities can either learn in their own language or can choose from among those selected on the basis of national and countrywide distribution ... ehe ... I mean how did the government help the minority language groups ... to get prepared before starting using mother tongue as a medium of instruction? I mean something like orthography development.... teacher training related supports.*

**HAWACTEFGD-2:** *Yes, ehee ... not a lot but some of us were trained by previous people who know the orthography somehow. Centrally developed Amharic books were translated into the language at the beginning. We were told the script should be ‘Latin script’.*

**Interviewer:** *So, do you feel the minority languages have been given good support? Any other one of you.*

**HAWACTEFGD-1:** *As he said ... ehee ... yes, not that much but ehee ... I think they are trying.*

**ARBACTEFGD-2:** *Well, what the government is doing is good if properly handled.*

**Interviewer:** *What do you mean by “if properly handled?”*

**ARBACTEFGD 2:** *Ehehe... no resources, no sufficient training. It seems that the mother-tongue education is left for teachers only. Ehe... that is... what I can say.*

When looking into the responses above from an interpretative phenomenological point of view, the participants had some reservations. As a result, the credibility issue could be in question, according to Lodico et al. (2013: 27).

In some cases, there were times when the participants dealt with irrelevant topics or raised trivial points instead of responding directly to the main question.

**Interviewer:** *For how long have you been teaching /training/ mother tongue teachers? How were you been trained to be mother tongue teachers’ trainer?*

When this question was answered by different participants, some dealt with their own history and background of their educational status. They also raised the issue of not being paid a good salary and the influence and bad comments made by the public about their being mother-tongue trainers because of lack of awareness.

Here is what one of the participants stated as a response to the interview question above.

**ARBACTE FGD-2:** *... the issue of mother tongue is something left only for us. I mean ehe... mother-tongue teachers. The government people are not following up and giving due support. We were given promises such as incentives and promotion, but the promise remained in words only ... There is lack of good administration. There are no facilities... like other subjects. For example, ehee... I have privately developed a reference material of my language to be used as dictionary, but I am not paid. No one encouraged me and I was not motivated ....*

#### **5.2.4 Improvements and Decisions as a Result of the FGD Pilot Test**

The pilot study conducted made me change my mind about conducting focus group discussions with college instructors and education bureau experts and I decided to conduct individual semi-structured interviews instead of FGDs. The reasons for doing this were that:

- The participants would feel more at liberty to provide information without hesitation created because of the distrust that might take place among the group members.
- It would be easier to manage time with individuals than in a group.
- It would be easier to focus participants' explanations on the point of discussion by using the probing method in individual interview than in group discussions.

#### **5.2.5 Individual Interviews with Mother-Tongue Medium Teachers**

For an interview with mother-tongue teachers, I selected one primary school nearby Arbaminch town. The school had mother-tongue medium classes from Grades 1–4. This area is considered as one of the areas where minority languages exist. It is an area neighbouring the sample area of the study. The language used as a medium of instruction from Grades 1–4 is known as “Gamoo” language which is a sister language to those of the two sample languages the main study deals with – Dawuro and Kontta. Both the pilot and the final sample languages were introduced as a medium of instruction in primary schools at the same time. Welmers (2018:108) claims that these languages are dialects rather than separate languages as they are mutually intelligible languages. Thus, it was appropriate to use these schoolteachers as pilot study participants. A small group of participants similar to those who are in the main sample can be used during pilot study (Lodico et al., 2010:27).

In the pilot study, four female mother-tongue teachers were selected for interviews. The teachers were selected by the director of the school. They were all women as they were the only teachers of mother tongue as a subject and mother tongue as an MOI of Grades 1–4 in the school. Among the four teachers only one was a teacher who taught all subjects in mother tongue. The other three teachers taught mother tongue as a subject.

In conducting individual interviews with these teachers, I realised that I was able to obtain the information he needed. However, the timing problem that I had during the FGD was observed here as well. Some of the interviewees, although the time of the day was not convenient for them, gave lengthy responses to my questions. This is where I experienced what Savin-Baden and Major (2013: 371) notes, namely, that “Sometimes participants may provide information they think the researcher wants to hear or cast themselves in a good light, rather than provide accurate information”.

This particular experience made me decide on changing the unstructured interviews to semi-structured interviews so that I could rely on an interview protocol in covering topics in a particular order in such a way that I could move systematically from a general to a specific issue (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:359) and that the interviews would be more focused.

I also conducted an interview with an expert in the Ministry of Education who did not want to be recorded though I tried to convince her that her responses and the recorded voice were confidential. Thus, I became aware that I needed to be prepared to take notes if a recording was not possible for transcription. The expert's request not to be recorded made me realise that I could not depend only on recordings.

#### **5.2.6 Lessons Learned and Decisions made from the Individual Interviews**

The guideline for the interview worked out very well. However, below are some lessons learnt and improvement that should be made.

- **The time and the place of the interview matters**

I scheduled the interviews with the participants at the end of the school day but learned that this was inconvenient for them. They lacked focus on the interview and were rushing to go home. The room they were given was not comfortable. Students were coming and listening to us through the window. There was shouting around the room as it was the end of the school day. So, it would be better to take advantage of a free period or use weekends with their permission. It was important to first arrange a

convenient time and day with each interviewee rather than making it all in one day. The need to have a quiet place is very important so as to avoid distractions.

### **5.2.7 Conclusions about the Pilot Study**

In general, the pilot study helped me not only to make better use of the data collection instruments but also to improve and change the instruments based on the situation and the objective reality of the interviewees. To that end, the following were the major changes and improvements made.

- I decided to conduct FGDs only with parents and community leaders and changed the planned FGD with other participants to individual semi-structured interviews. Thus, semi-structured interviews were planned for the field study with MoE experts, REB experts, college instructors, mother-tongue teachers.
- The unstructured interviews were changed to semi-structured interviews so that the interviewees would focus on information specific to interest to the study though the questions remained open-ended to allow for elaboration on the points under discussion (Denscombe, 2010:175).
- I also learned that a convenient time and comfortable place for the interview sessions was key to eliciting the best information from participants. Therefore, I decided to spend some time at the sample areas of the study to create good rapport and secure better times for the interviews especially in the schools selected.

## **5.3 PERSONS WHO PROVIDED THE DATA FOR THE STUDY**

### **5.3.1 Interviews**

The data were collected from groups of people who are pertinent to the study. The fact that the study deals with the mother tongue used as an Mol in primary schools of two of the minority language areas in Ethiopia, made it imperative to get the main stakeholders such as government policy implementers, primary schoolteachers teaching in mother tongue, college teacher educators, school directors and parents involved. To that end, four mother-tongue and curriculum experts from MoE, three lecturers from a nearby CTE where the teachers of the target languages of this study are trained and 32

teachers of MTB MLE in the primary schools were invited to individual interviews. A total of 39 persons were thus interviewed. The interviewees were given codes and numbers in the following way:

Schoolteachers who participated in the study during the interviews were given the following codes: DAT (Dawuro Teacher) indicates those participants from the Dawuro language area primary schools and KOT (Kontta Teacher) those from the Kontta area primary schools. The abbreviated codes were also numbered as DAT-1, 2, 3 etc. and KOT-1, 2, 3, etc. Similarly, participants from MoE and from the CTE were given the codes MEP (Ministry of Education Participants) and CTP (College of Teacher Education Participants) followed by numbers 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 5.1: Interview data sources

No.	Participants in the individual interview sessions	Participants		
		M	F	Total
1	MoE	1	3	4
2	CTE	3	-	3
3	Sample 1- Primary schools teachers	8	11	19
4	Sample-2 -Primary Schools teachers	6	7	13
Total number of participants				39

The total number of 32 mother-tongue teachers were interviewed from the eight primary schools i.e. five schools from Dawuro and three schools from Kontta. The difference in the number of schools for the two research sites is based on the size of the language area and the number of schools. There were four MoE participants and three participants from the CTE who were assigned to teach trainees of the two language groups. Altogether, 39 participants were interviewed from which the transcribed interviews were analysed and themes were originated.

Table 5.2: Educational qualifications of interview participants

No.	Qualification	Male	Female	Total
1	MA	4	2	6
2	BA	7	9	16

3	CTE Diploma	4	8	12
4	Certificate in Teaching (TTI)	3	2	5
<b>Total</b>		18	21	39

As can be seen Table 5.2 above, the interview participants were educated at different levels. In spite of this, they were able to easily understand my questions and respond accordingly. Therefore, I had adequate information and responses from the participants with whom there was clear understanding as the discussion went on.

### 5.3.2 Focus Group Discussions

There were three FGDs conducted with participants taken from the community representatives, parents' representatives, schoolteachers' representatives, school directors and the primary school students' representatives. Two FGDs from the Dawuro group and one from the Kontta Group were conducted. The FGDs participants were coded as DFG-1, 2, 3 and KFG-1, 2, 3 depending on the language area. Since the Dawuro area FGDs were conducted in two different schools, they were also given other distinguishing letters, A and B. DFG-A, 1, 2, 3 etc. and DFG-B, 1, 2, 3 etc. Since the FGD in Kontta was the only one this distinction was not needed.

The following table shows the sources of the data during the main study.

Table 5.3: Number and representation of FGD participants

Language area →	DAWURO LANGUAGE AREA		KONTTA LANGUAGE AREA	Total
FGD participants	FG1	FG2	FG3	
Community leaders	1	1	1	3
Director of School	1	1	1	3
Students' representative	1	1	1	3
Village administrator	1	1	-	2
Parents' representative	2	1	1	4
Teachers' representative	1	1	1	3
Total	7	6	5	18



I conducted three FGDs in three different schools of the Dawuro and Kontta language groups. Various persons who played an important role in the development of the two language communities were thus involved and this helped to yield rich data and a better understanding of the indigenous language teaching in the areas.

All the FGDs were audio-recorded and then transcribed in Amharic. The information that was needed in the analysis and interpretation of data was translated into English (See Appendix C for samples of the discussions translated into English).

Table 5.4: Educational qualifications of FGD participants

No.	Qualification	Male	Female	Total	Remark
1	MA	2	-	2	School directors
2	BA	2	1	3	
3	CTE Diploma	6	3	9	
4	Primary grade level certificate	2	1	3	
5	No education or below	1	-	1	
	Total	13	4	18	

In Table 5.4, it can be observed that participants had a range of qualifications. There was also one participant without any further education. Those participants who were at a lower level of education and the one who had not been educated, however, had good experience and knowledge of the mother-tongue instruction provided at the schools since they had been supporting the schools and sending their children to the schools for a long period of time. Thus, they could give suitable opinions and responses during the discussions.

#### 5.4 DATA ORGANISATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION PROCEDURE

All questions and answers during both the individual interviews and the FGDs were provided in Amharic. The data collected qualitatively from various participants through FGDs and in-depth interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission. The transcribed documents were voluminous. At the same time, there were a significant number of responses and information obtained from individual interviews which were similar without yielding any new information. In many instances, I had to probe and

attempt to access more and different information. Therefore, during data organisation and transcription, I decided to make use of data condensation also known as the data reduction principle and procedure to avoid overload and complexity of data. As Glaser and Laudel (2013, cited in Cohen & Morrison 2018:643) explain, data reduction is a process of distilling data to minimise complexity so as to determine the main points of the phenomena in the findings.

The data from the one-to-one interviews conducted with mother-tongue experts in the MoE, teachers, the teacher educators, and the data gathered from FGDs with parents' representatives, community leaders, teachers' representatives, directors and students representatives were all organised separately (See Appendix O for extracts from the interviews and FGDs). The data were systematically coded using different colours for different content to maintain open coding. The similar interview codes were grouped into categories in which axial coding was done. The categories that showed similar content and meaning were combined to develop themes and sub-themes for thematic analysis. This was the selective stage of qualitative data organisation.

After the coding, I analysed the data looking for themes . The reason for choosing this method is that different questions were asked for different participants (groups) based on their roles in MTE in order to obtain information related to the essence of the study. This helped me to construct themes arising from the research.

## **5.5 RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The results from the interviews and FGDs obtained from various groups of persons are discussed in this section. As can be seen from Table 5.2, all the interviewees were well qualified and had years of experience in education and in the field of MTE. They could thus provide well-informed answers to the questions that were posed to them. Although not all the persons who were included in the FGDs had academic qualifications, they were knowledgeable about MTE in their various communities.

By obtaining and using the opinions of groups of people at various levels in the education system, I managed to construct an all-inclusive view of the problem that I wished to investigate in this study. This aligns with social constructivism and the ZPD

theoretical views as discussed in Chapter 3. These theories deal with the main role language and linguistic tools play towards the development of thought and concepts of the child in addition to the cultural interactions and experiences they are exposed to. The theories also suggest the importance of the assistance adults and more competent peers provide to the children's learning.

### **5.5.1 Results from Interviews with Experts in the field of Mother-Tongue Education in the MoE**

With regard to the questions about the policy on MTB MLE and how well it is implemented, the interviewees were of the opinion that the policy is progressive since it allows all national languages to be used as the MoI at least at primary school level. (An example of the translated transcripts is provided in Appendix O1). However, every interviewee explained that the implementation of the policy lacks proper strategy. The first question asked was: **“How is the MTE programme being implemented according to the policy, specifically in minority language areas?”**

MEP-1 noted the following:

*“... the policy is the most progressive one, however, there is a big problem regarding its implementation. Yes, of course ... the policy explains the need to make the necessary preparation before implementing it but not all needed preparations were accordingly carried out. For example, we need to have changed the attitude of the community through continuous awareness raising before we let their children learn in their mother tongue.”*

MEP-3 also appreciated the policy but pointed out some of the drawbacks in relation to the implementation of the programme and explained the existing major problems that hindered proper implementation:

*“... the education and training policy has laid a remarkable foundation for local languages to be used in the schools since children's education will be successful if children are taught in their own language. However, I will have a reservation to say that the implementation is also appropriate and according to the policy. Obviously,*

*there are gaps here and there, one of which is the training of teachers in addition to inadequate materials supply, lack of awareness raising.”*

The above responses relate to what Ball (2011:6) points out regarding the importance of attitude and behavioural change of the community as one of the success factors for MTB MLE. Accordingly, she says: “To retain their mother tongue, children whose first language is not the Mol must have ... exposure to positive parental attitudes to maintaining the mother tongue, both as a marker of cultural identity and for certain instrumental purposes (e.g., success in the local economy or global trade)”.

Though a significant number of community members understand the importance of MTB MLE, more prestige is given to the English language than the mother tongue in the community. Many participants agreed that the lack of awareness raising before trying to implement the MTB MLE was inadequate. This means that as explained in the literature review (section 3.3.2) among the nine components of successful MTB MLE, awareness raising, and mobilisation are essential.

When asked what had caused some of the existing problems with implementation, MEP-1 commented that there were no proper guidelines or a strategy as to how the different languages should be taught at school or in any other sectors.

*“I think one of our problems is lack of a well-organised guideline and strategy that enables each of us at various levels to accordingly serve the promotion of MTB MLE in addition to several other drawbacks we have in this regard.”*

The participants were asked particularly about the perceptions of the community with regard to MTE in minority language areas. In this regard, the interviewees stated that community members and parents were not adequately informed about the importance of MTE before the programme began and, because of this, there were still some community members who perceived MTE as a problem which would have a negative impact on their children’s educational achievements.

MEP-4: *“Yes, one of the gaps is lack of sufficient awareness raising which would have changed the negative attitude of some community members who still doubt the importance of MTE...”*

MEP-3 also explained:

*“I think no one doubts the importance of MTE for children except some community members who do not have any idea about education in general and the importance of mother tongue in education in particular. It would have been necessary to conduct strong awareness raising earlier for them. The support and proper implementation also remain a problem still.”*

The interviewees regarded MTE as important as can be seen from the answers that they provided. However, they frequently raised the problem related to implementation as indicated above. The responses are in line with the idea raised in the literature review section of this study about the need to conduct awareness raising for the successful implementation of MTB MLE. As Malone (2018: 16) (section 3.5.2) states, the goal of awareness raising and mobilisation is to provide information for stakeholders at all levels so that they will be encouraged to take part in the implementation of the programme. However, as far as the responses from participants are concerned, this crucial element was not given due attention by education authorities. Similarly, Heugh and Skutnabb (2013:276) also explain the need for community engagement to maintain successful MTB MLE, believing that community involvement would improve if they became aware of the importance of MTB MLE.

Various questions about the support provided and problems that arose with MTE in minority areas were raised and different information was given. The question asked was: **“What special and specific support has been offered to the minority language area whose language was recently given the status of being used as school language?”** MEP-2 explained the following regarding support provided:

*“Obviously, the minority language areas would have been given special treatment and support as they are new to the situation. But this has not been the case so far. ... No special treatment has been offered from the Ministry’s side primarily because of the mandate of primary education given to the regional education bureaus than the MoE at central level. Even then, I don’t think any specific consideration is offered to them.”*

According to the participants from MoE, the support that was supposed to be offered to minority language areas was not provided. This is because of lack of a well-designed implementation plan.

Another question was raised in relation to mother-tongue teachers' training provided in minority language areas. The interviewees were of the opinion that though the policy states that teachers' training should be offered in the respective language of the teacher in which he or she was trained, the reality, however, was that teachers were trained in English in most colleges. One of the major questions raised during the interview was: **"How would you evaluate the teacher training to teach a mother tongue as a subject and in a mother tongue in minority language areas?"**

MEP-2 explained the following about teachers' training:

*"It is so sad that not only are teachers not trained in the mother tongue that they will be teaching in when graduating but also as far as some reports from supervision and monitoring indicate that a number of teachers teaching mother tongue as a subject are not trained as mother-tongue teachers. This is against the education and training policy of the country for sure and would need a follow-up in the future."*

The participant's response above shows that the focus given to proper implementations of MTE is minimal and is not according to policy.

The education and training policy as discussed in section 3.6 states that teachers that are trained for primary school teaching should be trained in the mother tongue of the respective region. The policy reads as follows: "The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area" (MoE, 1994:23). However, most of the CTEs do not practise this at all, although there are a few who work according to the policy.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:274) (section 3.5.1) also indicate that mother-tongue teachers who were trained in a language other than mother tongue suffer from lack of knowledge of terminologies to teach in mother tongue. Similarly, a report by the Early Grade Learning Community of Practice (2011:15) (section 3.9) explains that,

among several major factors contributing to the low reading achievements of children, is a lack of proper training and support to mother-tongue teachers.

The status of mother-tongue materials development and distribution for schools was also a point of discussion with the experts from MoE. The experts noted that, although an effort was being made, materials were not sufficiently supplied to schools as they envisaged.

The question raised specifically related to materials development was: **“What is the status of mother tongue materials development and provision in minority language areas?”**

MEP-1 responded as follows:

*“The mandate about primary school teaching learning process and the supply and distribution of materials goes mainly to regional education bureaus though the Ministry is also responsible to maintain a standard and balance. The Ministry in collaboration with regions is trying its best to provide children with adequate number of books though we still have a lot to do. Yes, as you said there can be more scarcity of books in minority language areas as compared to others of course but this is a problem that the regional education should deal with to be frank.”*

MEP-4 said:

*“The government is trying to meet a 1:1 ratio of educational materials distribution with a fund secured from the World Bank in a programme called General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) though it cannot be said it is fully successful at the moment.”*

With regard to the transition of mother tongue as the MoI to English at the end of Grade 4 particularly in the southern region, the participants from the MoE responded that the transition should not have been at Grade 4 since children will not be able to use English at this level. Accordingly, MEP-3 said the following:



*“I personally do not agree that the transition should be different in different regions in such a way that some transit at the end of Grade 6 and others at the end of Grade 8 and still others at the end of Grade 4 (which is the case in SNNPRS). We need to develop a uniform guideline and proper strategy. Our directorate is working on it and we are conducting studies that would help as to how and when to transit from mother tongue to English medium of instruction. I am sure things will change if we come to the right scenario.”*

MEP-4 explained.

*“The transition from mother tongue to English at Grade 4 level is completely wrong. It seems that it is a political decision rather than being an evidence-based studied decision. The Ministry and regions should think about it once again.”*

All these responses align with what scholars such as Heugh (2006, cited in Derji, 2010:14) suggest. They argue for a longer period of mother tongue instruction to help children to achieve better at school. Early-exit from mother-tongue instruction was also explained as a subtractive model which Heugh (2011:113-115) regards as a “weak model” (section 3.5.4.1).

Moreover, the responses are also in line with the BICS and CALP concepts of Cummins (2000: 55-59) (section 3.5.4.3). The author argues that the BICS level of proficiency should take a number of years to let children use the language at CALP level.

The MoE participants were also asked whether there was any kind of specific strategy document to support MTE in general and those in minority language areas in particular.

MEP-1: *“We don’t have specifically developed strategy documents as such. As I said, since the mandate of primary education mainly goes to regions, we were expecting the regions to develop such a strategy document, but I don’t think they have it so far.”*

He continued: *“You know this is the main drawback we have. I mean we have not yet developed such a document. We simply depend on the policy document which is a general one. In fact, we have started a study to develop a strategy document. A*

*team of university professors have begun working on it. We need to have it, of course.”*

I continued with a probing question on whether or not there is a language policy, or any language planning documents. MEP-1 said:

*“As I said earlier, we have lots of implementation weaknesses. As a country, Ethiopia does not have a language policy document so far. Recently, a study was organised to develop a language policy document of the country and the policy document was drafted by a team of professors gathered from the universities and presented to the parliament by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. We were also involved in coordinating and in the data collection. However, the draft has not been discussed and finalised to come out as a policy document.”*

A similar question was raised with another expert from another directorate of the MoE who did not want to be audio-recorded.

MEP-2: *“This is an important question and thank you for asking. Yes... the main problem is we have no well-designed strategies and plans. You know the education and training policy, as well as the rights given to all indigenous languages are very progressive and good ones. However, when it comes to implementing it, we have no strategy and plan both at national and regional level. By the way, as you know, there is no uniformity of transition from mother-tongue to English language as a medium of instruction between regions. Some regions transit at Grade 5 level and some other at Grade 7 and still others at Grade 9 level. This is because of a lack of a common strategy as a country.”*

MEP-4 also reported that, since the policy has been in place, and there was no proper planning before beginning MTE.

*“It was just a rush from the government officials of the language areas side. Every ethnolinguistic community government leader wanted their language to be used as a language of education without good preparation and a plan.”*

These and other similar responses indicate that the policy statement has not been implemented effectively. The policy statement reads: “Making the necessary preparation, nations and nationalities can either learn in their own language or can choose from among those selected on the basis of national and countrywide distribution” (MoE, 1994:23).

The adequacy of the language to be used as academic language was also discussed by the MEPs when asked **“Do you think the two languages spoken in the areas are suitable to be used as school languages?”**

MEP-1 responded as follows:

*“I would say no. This question will lead us to think of the teachers’ abilities because teachers are the main persons in the teaching and learning scenario. The teachers of these languages themselves have not been trained in these languages ... I mean they don’t know the orthography. They don’t read and write correctly. This is not because they are weak, but the language was not ready to be used in schools and colleges some years ago. It is a new phenomenon and it lacks the necessary conditions to be used in schools. It should have been well-developed before being used in schools both as Mol and as a subject.”*

Other participants had different opinions regarding the readiness of the languages to be used in schools. For instance, MEP-3 said:

*“Well, we cannot say they are perfectly ready at this point in time since it is a new beginning. However, we should not wait until they are perfectly ready. We need to start with all the drawbacks and make them perfect through time.”*

Another probing question was raised to make sure whether the policy was implemented: **“Do you think the policy statement that says ‘Ensure that the curriculum developed and text books prepared at central and regional levels are based on sound pedagogical and psychological principles and up to international standard ...’ has been implemented?”**

MEP-1 said:

*“No, there is a big gap in this regard and the minority languages have not been given due attention. The quality of books has not been tested and materials are scarce, teachers’ training is not well organised and there are many drawbacks.”*

In general, the participants from the MoE believed that though starting MTE in minority language areas is a great achievement, it has not been well planned. They confirmed that the policy had not been implemented effectively.

When a general probing question was raised regarding the attention given to the minority languages, MEP-1 said the following:

*“The mother-tongue curriculum issue is the mandate of the region. The Ministry needs to develop strategies and set standards to maintain a balance between regions. There are not enough materials; there are no supplementary reading materials, dictionaries etc. Only the seven bigger languages that are selected by USAID and MoE have some opportunities of getting these materials relatively better than others though we are trying our best through a World Bank fund under a programme called GEQIP.”*

As far as the responses of the participants from MoE were concerned, they believed that there was a mismatch between the policy and the implementation. They accepted that the implementation of the policy had not been accomplished. They admitted that there was no plan or well-designed strategy. To that end, the response by MEP-3 can be regarded as a general remark

*“Well, I suggest that there should be a well-structured plan of implementation. We need to be prepared with all the inputs for the children’s learning. Materials must be designed according to the cultural and environmental aspects of the areas of the minority languages. Teachers should be well trained before being assigned as mother-tongue teachers in schools. MTE strategy and language policy are highly needed. Equally like other inputs, the need to teach the community about the*

*importance of MTB MLE should be given priority. But we have not done all these. It is like the proverb 'putting the cart before the horse'."*

### **5.5.2 Summary of the Findings from the MoE Participants**

The responses from the MEPs are summarised below:

- Participants appreciated the policy but believed that implementation problem is the major drawback.
- They believed that lack of awareness from the community side was one of the reasons for the drawbacks created.
- They explained that the lack of well-developed guidelines and a strategy was another limitation of the implementation.
- They disclosed the inadequacy teacher training for the minority language areas.
- They believed that the materials development process and procedure had compromised the quality of the MTE materials.
- They believed that the time for transition from mother-tongue medium to the second language as an Mol was too short.
- They claimed that the orthography of the target languages needed standardisation.

### **5.5.3 Results from Interviews with Teachers**

The interviews with mother-tongue teachers contained various questions and provided comprehensive feedback. Questions about their feelings of MTE and the opinion of the communities where they worked, were asked. They were also asked about their relevant training, as well as the support they were provided. Most teacher participants acknowledged the need for having the mother tongue as a school language since it is a matter of recognising the identity of the language owners. Other participants also mentioned that children would learn easily and effectively when taught in their mother tongue instead of struggling with lessons that are taught in a language they did not know. Still other participants explained that it was easier for them to teach in their own language than in a second or third language.

The participants raised various opinions with regard to the community feelings about MTE. They said that not all community members have similar understanding about it. In answer to the following question: **“What do you think is the feeling of the community about their children learning in their mother tongue?”**, KOT-3 noted the following:

*“Still there are sort of challenges from some community members in such a way that their previous thinking and attitude about education has not been changed. They feel that there is no education without learning in English or Amharic. They say that the child knows the mother tongue at home and in the village etc.”*

DAT-8 explained that mother-tongue teachers are not respected as equal to other subject teachers even by the students themselves.

*“Both the village community members and the school community do not give due respect for mother-tongue teachers and the mother tongue lessons as well. The students feel that they know the language better than or equal to the teacher. The community members feel that local language remains at a local level without yielding any advantage in the outer world.”*

This perception emanates from lack of awareness raising both from the community and the students' side. The community and parents as a whole were not aware of the importance of mother-tongue learning and teaching. The community should have been aware of the importance of the mother tongue as the most important asset of human beings for the mother tongue not only reflects the wealth of the society but is also a repository of local knowledge, history and ideas, as Kamwangamalu in Hornberger (2008:136-37) (section 3.5) indicates.

However, some participants argued that there were community members at all levels that favoured and advocated for MTE as a result of their children's educational achievement. Among the participants who argued in favour of MTE, KOT-1 said the following while responding to the question above:

*“The perception of community members and parents has changed nowadays in such a way that they are favouring MTE mainly because their children are improving in*

*achieving better grades than the previous times. However, they still insist that their children should be able to make use of English as well as Amharic.”*

With regard to their training in the mother tongue as a subject and teaching other subjects in the mother tongue, the teachers commented that they were not provided with adequate training. The question asked in addition to probe deeper about the issue was: **“What was your training status to teach mother tongue or other subjects in mother tongue?”**

A mother-tongue teacher who has been teaching for the last 12 years in Dawuro schools, DAT-7 said:

*“Thank you for inviting me to the interview. I teach mathematics in Dawuro language, but I was trained in English. I struggled by the myself to understand the orthography without having any one to train me. I struggled because I like my language and I also feel privileged to have our language as a language of education.”*

KOT-3 raised almost a similar issue regarding lack of training in a mother tongue:

*“I am so proud of being a mother-tongue teacher after many years of service. I highly like being a teacher of my own language. At the beginning of my assignment as a mother-tongue teacher in Grade 3, it was a little bit difficult to acquaint myself to reading and writing of the language which I speak fluently as it is my mother tongue. I was struggling with reading and writing because I was not trained to teach mother tongue. Later, however, I learned through time and now I am perfect both in writing and reading in the language.”*

Similarly, another interview participant complained about not being trained while mother-tongue teachers who speak other languages spoken by more inhabitants in Ethiopia were frequently given training in language skills and mother-tongue teaching methodology.

DAT-11 said the following as a response to the above question:

*“No ... no ... In fact, I was not trained to teach in a mother tongue. I was just trained to teach mathematics. The medium of instruction was English in the college when I was trained and after I graduated and when I was assigned to a primary school where I worked for six years, I was told to teach in Dawuro language. Though I know the language very well, it was difficult for me to use it in reading and writing at the beginning.”*

These responses contradict the education and training policy that stipulates that primary education during teacher training should be offered in the mother tongue. The policy states: “The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area” (MoE, 1994:23).

Participants were also asked what problems they came across as a result of not being trained in the mother tongue and many of them responded that though they had made progress regarding understanding the orthography, it was difficult to understand it in the beginning. Obviously, teachers who do not understand or know the reading and writing of the language they are expected to teach, do not teach it at all. As indicated in Chapter 3, (Section 3.9), teachers should be fluent in both reading and writing skills of the language they use to teach.

KOT-7 said the following when asked about the problems they faced.

*“There are lots of problems such as lack of teachers who are trained to teach in this particular language, lack of interest from both teachers to be mother-tongue teachers and students to learn in mother tongue, and also, none of us are good with the orthography as it is new to every one of us and we have not been well trained about the orthography, and there is no appropriate support offered.”*

A number of interviewees said that, because of the interest they had in teaching in their mother tongue, they had been exerting every effort to acquaint themselves with the orthography and consequently, they were able to read and write the language better than when they first began teaching in that language.

A mother tongue as a subject teacher at Grade 3, KOT-4 said the following:



*“I have never been given training though I have been assigned as a Kontta mother-tongue teacher. However, it has been encouraging to see our language being recognised as a language of instruction. Thus, I have been teaching myself to read and write my language and now I am very good at it.”*

Another participant, a mathematics teacher, DAT-5 explained his comprehensive teaching problems. He stated:

*“I graduated as a Health and Physical Education (HPE) teacher. Although I was teaching HPE, I have been requested to teach mathematics in my mother tongue as there was not any trained mother-tongue medium teacher though I myself was not trained as well. I accepted the request and began teaching as I was a native speaker of the language.”*

As researcher, I probed to find out how he acquainted himself with the orthography. The teacher said the following:

*“I just struggled by myself and did sort of self-teaching. Though it was difficult at the beginning, I became successful over time...”*

When asked whether or not he had been given an opportunity to be trained since he was given this responsibility, he asserted that he had not been given any training.

*“No, I have never been offered any training for a single day.”*

All these responses relate to what Mekonnen et al. (2018:23) (section 3.9) indicate by saying primary schoolteachers in sub-Saharan countries are often not provided with adequate and effective training to teach the school curriculum. This is confirmed by DAT-6 who provided the following feedback:

*“In the beginning, I was hesitant to be a mother-tongue teacher since I did not have the awareness and as I have never been taught the language to read and write. However, later on though, I was encouraged and loved teaching in my mother tongue, and I made all the effort to adequately learn and be efficient in reading and*

*writing [in my mother tongue]. Now I feel that I use the orthography perfectly since I continued self-teaching myself as no training was offered.”*

As can be seen from all the responses above, neither teachers who are assigned to teach in mother tongue nor the mother tongue as a subject were taught and trained in the language they are teaching or using to teach currently in their schools and colleges.

A report by the Early Grade Learning Community of Practice (2011:15) (section 3.9) explains that, among several major factors contributing to the low reading achievement of children, a lack of proper training and support to mother-tongue teachers is one of the reasons. Some of the younger participants responded that they were taught in the mother tongue when they were at elementary school before joining the CTE, but they also claimed that they tended to forget as they did not practise it after that. KOT-2 reflected:

*“I was taught all subjects in Kontta language in the elementary classes - Grades 1–5. Later when I went to junior high school and then to high school it was only English, and I no longer taught reading and writing in mother tongue.”*

The issue of proper training for teachers is crucial in the education scenario. Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:274) contend the importance of high quality pre-and in-service education for teachers in multilingual education context. The authors opine that teachers who have been trained in a language different from the mother tongue to teach in mother tongue will have experience challenges with lack of proper terminology and knowledge of the subject matter in the respective mother tongue (section 3.5.1).

When asked about the suitability of the mother tongues spoken in their areas and the orthography of the languages, the teachers stated that, at first, there were many challenges though it became better over time. All interview participants were asked the following question regarding the suitability of the mother tongue spoken in their region to be used for MTE: **“How suitable is the language spoken in your area to be used as a language of instruction?”**

DAT-7 provided the following answer.

*“Well, it looks suitable and is becoming fine as compared to the beginning years of the programme since it was a new phenomenon. Now we are progressing well, though still there are gaps regarding refining the orthography and having suitable terminology for academic concepts.”*

Similarly, KOT-4 responded as follows:

*“Since the Kontta language has been used as a school language, we have seen that improvement takes place through time and practice. At this time, I would say our language is suitable though there are some terminologies that have no equivalent meaning in the language. However, I am optimistic that it will continue to be improved over time.”*

KOT-5 raised another point by saying the following:

*“I teach Environmental Science in Grades 3 and 5. It is good to begin using the language [spoken in this area] though there are some problems regarding terminologies. Some words don’t have equivalent terminologies in English or Amharic, so we have difficulty in explaining what it means. For example, words such as ‘photosynthesis’ or ‘chemical’ etc. are difficult to explain though children understand the concept explained in their own language better than when it is explained in any other foreign languages.”*

The issue of having suitable academic terminologies is line with what Baker (2011:170) (section 3.5.1) explains about the distinction of language in BICS usage and that of CALP. In this discussion, he explains that in mathematics and science lessons, children would need academic language to understand more difficult concepts. According to him, native speakers have fluency speaking the language using correct grammar and proper sociolinguistic forms, as well as familiar social context rules which requires a BICS level of language proficiency. However, schools should enrich the language with academic and scientific terminologies to enable the children to use the language for academic purposes which is the CALP level (section 3.5.4.3). Moreover, Baker (2006:51) deals with the need for language planning before dealing with implementation. This is where one of the language planning components called corpus planning develops a new

orthography and the grammar and spelling is standardised. Baker indicates that corpus planning deals with all aspects of standardisation, vocabulary and linguistics such as phonology, morphology and aspects of the language as well as the grammatical functions and usage (section 3.6).

With regard to the problems with the orthography and related issues, the participants said that there is still a problem of having a standard orthography. One of the questions raised was: **“What do you think are the other problems regarding orthography and dialect and what should be the solutions?”**

DAT-2 emphasised the need to have a standard orthography, although he did not feel it was a crucial problem as such in relation to the dialect of the language.

*“In our area dialect is not a big issue as such; however, there are orthographic mistakes in some of the educational materials. A couple of years back we were asked by the zonal education department to evaluate and identify gaps in the mother-tongue books. We gave comments mainly related to spelling errors and some culture related concepts. They promised to improve everything shortly, but no one has shown up since then.”*

As Cahill and Rice (2014:2) (section 3.7.2.2) explain, orthography is a system for representing a language in written form. The development of orthography improves through literacy development, development of primers, teaching reading and writing and by facilitating the development of varieties of materials. However, as DAT-2 indicated, attention has not been given to improving the development of the orthography to advance the literacy through preparing as many reading materials as possible in their respective minority language areas.

When asked about dialect-related differences of the Dawuro language, DAT-9 contended that:

*“Though not significant, there are slight differences in writing and pronunciation because of dialects in the low land and high land areas.”*

The issue of orthography and dialect are interrelated. Obviously, in developing educational materials, it will be difficult to entertain all dialects at the same time. Thus, it calls for a decision for which of the dialects to use. One of the many solutions, according to Cahill and Rice (2014:12), is that of designing an orthography that will serve all language groups, even in languages with fairly divergent dialects.

The teachers were of the opinion that the support provided with the teaching and learning in the mother tongue has not been as adequate as they had expected. They also insisted that the quality should be revisited.

A question was raised about the books and the quality of the books in the various mother tongues spoken in their areas. The teachers said that there was a big problem of the availability of educational materials in schools for both the children and the teachers. Several participants were also doubtful that the materials were prepared by qualified curriculum material writers. When a probing question such as **“Who prepares the books and where are they prepared?”** was raised the following response was given by DAT-10:

*“The responsibility of mother-tongue primary class books development is that of the Regional Education Bureau and the Zonal Education Department. The office simply contracts educated people of the surrounding whom they think are skilful in knowing the language and who have teaching and learning experience in general. I don’t think they have curriculum development and quality education materials preparation capacity. In general, the challenge of mother-tongue materials preparation and provision is immensely problematic.”*

One of the questions I raised during the interview session was: **“What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using the mother tongue?”**

DAT-11 was of the opinion that:

*“One of the biggest problems we encounter is lack of materials in a form of textbooks for the students, teacher’s guide for the teacher, supplementary*

*educational materials etc. You know we sometimes have just a single book for all the class students to use or we don't have one at all for some subjects. ... You know several children don't read according to their level since they don't have sufficient materials that enhances their reading skills. I am sorry our children are very poor in reading because of lack of reading materials."*

KOT-4 commented about the quality of the books they were using as well

*"The quality of books is among the things we need to give attention to. The writers of these books are from zonal education bureau who are of course native speakers of the language and have worked in the education sector for quite a number of years. However, I am not sure if they have experiences of writing educational books. We, as teachers, see lots of mistakes in the books that are both spelling errors as well as content problems."*

DAT-10 stated that some mother-tongue books were copied from other language books and did not fit the cultural and environmental aspects of the area.

*"Except recently some books at lower grade levels have been developed in the zonal education department. Many of the books were simply translated from Amharic books or other languages instead of being written with the contents reflecting our culture and environment."*

A teacher of mother tongue as a subject, KOP-7, pointed out that the support is minimal:

*"The government representatives here in our area and those at the higher levels don't show up to help us. They don't visit and look into the successes and failures [of the programme] at all. They don't give us professional development. For example, I was trained only once two years ago for ten days and no more. There are lots of teachers who have not been trained at all. I have not seen a government representative coming to this school to observe what is going on regarding MTE."*

A mother-tongue teacher, DAT-11 A-1, teaching Dawuro as a mother tongue as subject said the following regarding the challenges they encountered.

*“I have been teaching mother tongue for many years. I graduated as a teacher of Amharic but was assigned as a Dawuro language teacher. I like teaching mother tongue, of course. During all this time no support or professional development was given for us. The language is not given attention except being given the right to be school language. No training is offered. Materials are not sufficiently distributed. At a certain time, we were told to evaluate the books and we found lots of mistakes, but the books are not improved so far. By the way, it is only by word that the language is said to be equal to other languages, but it is not equal to the others in such a way that no support and follow-up has been provided.”*

Another teacher from one of the Kontta primary schools, KOT-6, said:

*“The biggest problem of teaching and learning in Kontta language both as a subject and as medium of instruction is the high scarcity of books written in the language. It seems that the Regional Education Bureau does not care about the successfulness of the programme. They simply announced that we should teach in mother tongue without offering any support.”*

As I probed for more responses, KOT-6 continued, saying the following:

*“Well, the main problem I see is lack of sufficient mother-tongue materials. The scarcity of mother-tongue materials is greater than the scarcity of other materials. I also doubt the quality since I don’t think the people who prepare books are capable in that regard as well. In most cases, all other subject books are sufficient at least to share for three or four children but for a reason that I don’t know, the mother-tongue books are always very scarce and sometimes no single book is there.”*

DAT-9 raised lack of continuous professional development and training as one of the challenges they are facing.

*“Though some of us were taught primary school lessons in Dawuro language and the language as a subject in primary schools, those teachers who graduated before the language was introduced as school language have not had any experience of using the written language. This means that we were expecting continuous*

*professional development training for all of us as support from the relevant government and non-government organisations, but nothing was done.”*

As can be clearly seen from the above data, several of the teacher participants raised several issues raised during the interview. In general, the participants viewed that significant tasks including teacher training, materials provision, proper support, awareness raising standardisation of the languages, well-designed plan and strategy need to be improved and taken care of. All the responses correspond to the essential components of MTB MLE as explained by Malone (2010: 11, 2018:16) (section 3.5.2), as well as the principles of effective MTE discussed by Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:272) and Ball (2011:6) in the same section.

With regard to the challenges that they faced in the implementation of the MTE policy in their areas, various answers were provided. KOT-3 said that there was no support provided to enhance and promote MTE.

*“One of the weaknesses of the MTE emanates from the lack of proper guidance and support from both the zonal and the regional education office authorities... In my four years’ service as mother-tongue teacher, the support rendered to our school to promote MTE and its task is very minimal or almost none.”*

The need to support teachers by providing in-service teacher training as indicated in section 3.9 is highly recommended. Mekonnen et al. (2018:23) contend that in-service teacher training has had an impact on teachers’ pedagogical skills and knowledge in many sub-Saharan African countries.

When asked: **“Do you think learning in mother tongue and teaching mother tongue as a subject has helped children to learn other school languages such as English and Amharic?”** KOT-5 said the following:

*“In one way yes, it helps but since the Latin script in which the Dawuro language is written is similar to the English, but the sounds of the script differ. I have seen that children at lower level are confused in reading and writing similar scripts with*



*different letter sounds. For example, a letter “C” in Kontta is read with a different sound from the sound of “C” in English.”*

This issue that there is a difference in the sounds of Dawuro as well as Kontta and English for similar script/alphabet should be discussed with teachers so that they can understand that it should be included and explained well to the learners in their classes.

I gained the impression that the teachers did not know or understand that the difference created with the sounds of alphabet/script/ causes problem in the language learning of the children. Thus, the teachers would need training regarding this crucial issue as well. The challenge related to scripts or alphabet introduction would be solved by applying what Chumbo (cited in McIlwraith, 2013:47) explains. According to Chumbo and Malone (2010:16-17), the second language should be taught orally before writing and literacy are introduced to avoid confusion created by this until the children get ready to discriminate the sounds and understand and know the related symbols.

As Malone (2018:6) (section 3.5) states, proper and effective teacher training at CTEs is vital. Similarly, despite a recently developed education road map having been developed, Tefera et al. (2018:39) contend that CTEs and Universities fail to properly offer training to primary school mother-tongue teachers. This means that had there been adequate training at the CTE, the problem indicated above would not have created confusion.

The medium of instruction in CTEs as well as university teacher training faculties is English. In the case of CTEs, graduates are deployed to teach in the mother tongue of the primary school students. Some respondents indicated that the graduates (who become teachers in primary schools) can find it difficult to deliver a subject matter they studied in CTE in English into the mother tongue of the students. The situation could even be more complicated because, presumably, some teacher trainees in CTEs are not sufficiently proficient in the mother tongue of the students. (MoE, 2018:39)

Another problem was that they were not supported to improve their careers and to update their professionalism. DAT-2 said:

*“It seems that once we are assigned as mother-tongue teachers, there is no opportunity for us to be given further education as our language is only meant in our area and at primary school level. This has created sort of discouragement to continue as a mother-tongue teacher.”*

DAT-9 said the following regarding the problem in reading languages with similar script:

*“When I read English, I tend to pronounce it like my mother tongue ... the long vowels used in the mother tongue confuse me with the vowels in English as well. It also affects my writing skill in English. Moreover, the orthography [of my mother tongue] has no standardisation. Different people write the same word with a different spelling as there is no dictionary for reference.”*

As indicated above, teachers feel that they have not been given sufficient training and support as mother-tongue teachers. They also have an opinion that the necessary awareness raising has not been carried out so that the community in general and the parents in particular know the advantages of teaching and learning in mother tongue at the primary school level. They also indicated that there is no clear strategy for transition from mother tongue to other school languages. Moreover, the participant teachers said that the quality of and access to materials is very low.

#### **5.5.4 Summary of the Responses from the Primary Schoolteachers**

The responses from the primary school mother-tongue teachers are summarised below.

- The teachers claimed that the perceptions and attitudes of members of the community towards MTE need some more work to bring about attitudinal change.
- They explained that there is still lack of respect for MTE and for teachers who teach in mother tongue.
- They claimed that there is no proper training, or no training offered to mother-tongue teachers either at college preservice training level or after graduation as in-service training.

- They confirmed that though both minority languages can be used as academic languages, they still need more development to refine the orthography and the use of academic terminologies.
- The teachers pointed out that there is orthographical problem in using similar scripts and different sounds while using the Latin script for both languages.
- They claimed that quality of mother-tongue materials and materials provision is inadequate.
- They reported that assigning unqualified teachers as mother-tongue teachers is one of the drawbacks in a number of primary schools.

### 5.5.5 Results from Interviews with Teacher Educators

Interviews were also held with three teacher educators from the CTE. One of the interview questions was: **“What do you think is the perception of the community and the parents regarding their children learning in mother tongue?”**

CTP-2 said the following:

*“Okay! The perception of the majority of the community shows misunderstanding in such a way that many parents feel letting their children learn in the language they speak at home is not important. They would like their children to learn in English or in Amharic.”*

When I inquired about the reason and the justification why parents need to let their children be taught in English and Amharic, CTP-2 said the following:

*“I mean, you know, they feel that the best way for learning modern education is English language. They don’t understand why mother tongue is important. More than that they say their language is spoken only in their vicinity and nowhere else. In most instances, parents feel that children will get a job if they learn in English and Amharic than in a local language.”*

A reflection on this kind of perception has been stated in section 3.5.1 of this study. Skattum and Brock-Utne (2009:105) note that the use and the promotion of multilingual education is not to reject national or international languages for wider communication. It

is rather to enable children to have better results in learning in both local languages, and the second or third languages as well as international languages.

By the same token, Pinnock et al. (2011:8) explain that the core issue of MTE is to let the children understand an idea in a language in which they think and communicate so that they learn the second language words for that idea and this could help them to learn the second or third language easily (section 3.5.1).

When asked if they are trained to teach primary teachers speaking a mother tongue and if the medium of instruction in the college for this purpose is then the mother tongue, the college instructors reported as follows.

CTP-1 opined:

*“Firstly, I myself was not trained as mother-tongue instructor. I graduated as an English teacher. Later on, however, I was told to teach mother tongue to the trainees from my area. There is no support to help us to improve and enhance [our knowledge of] the mother tongue either from the government or from the college administrators.”*

CTP-2 responded the question in a similar way:

*“I graduated in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and I was employed to teach English teaching skills at the college. However, later on, I was assigned as a Dawuro language teacher. In the CTE, the Mol is English for all other subjects except for Dawuro language lesson. Trainee teachers are trained in English while they are in the college. However, after graduation and during their actual teaching work, the teachers teach all subjects in mother tongue after graduation”*

As it was indicated in section 3.9, the Education and Training Policy states: “The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area” (MoE, 1994:23). However, as can be seen from the feedback of the two participants CTP-1 and CTP-2, it has not been implemented accordingly.

Several studies have shown the importance of professional development training that should be offered to teacher educators to improve skills and knowledge (Early Grade Learning Community of Practice, 2011:15) (section 3.9). However, mother-tongue teacher educators who acted as participants in the sample areas complained about not having been provided with any type of training.

With regard to the follow-up and support provided to MTE, the CTE interviewees stated that there no such support was provided to enhance the MTE in colleges. An interviewee commented that they were not offered support of any kind including how to train teacher students to teach a mother tongue. In this regard, the following question was asked: **“How would you measure the support and follow-up provided by the government in the implementation of MTE in the minority language areas like yours?”**

CTP-1 said:

*“Amazingly no support is given from either the college or any other external relevant office only three of us run here and there as a department of mother tongue members. No attention is given.... It seems that the awareness raising to let them change their attitude should also be given to the college community as well.”*

CTP-3 also commented saying that:

*“It looks that MTE is left for the instructors or the teachers only ... no one is observed supporting.”*

It is thus clear that the importance of mother tongue in minority language areas is not a concern for the CTEs and the regional departments of education where the research was conducted.

Concerning the adequacy of the language to be used as a language of education, the participants felt that the only way to bring the language to the proper academic language level was through using it in the school lessons. The question asked in this regard was: **“How suitable is the language spoken in your area to be used as a language of instruction?”**

CTP-3 stated:

*“I cannot say the Dawuro or the Kontta language at this stage have reached adequate level of academic language. However, it is good that we have started using them as school languages since the adequate level comes over time.”*

CTP-1 said:

*“The minority languages lack scientific terms and full academic language. We don’t have equivalent words in the language to explain some concepts. It seems that this is true in many languages. There are languages that have not their own words and so use Latin or Greek terminologies. We need to create some conceptual terminologies that will be learned through time however.”*

According to Heugh (2011:136) (section 3.5.4.3), transfer is a cognitive process in which whatever is known in the first language, including knowledge of the language and academic concepts, is transferred to the second language. This cannot happen unless the first language is fully and sufficiently well-developed. Based on the feedback from the participants, further development of Dawuro and Kontta, the languages spoken in this area of Ethiopia, will have to be done to the level that Heugh mentions.

CTP-2 reported as follows:

*“I think yes, it is somewhat adequate though I cannot say it is perfect and obviously it needs frequent improvement and development. The main thing is teachers are not well trained in the language. We are not even given due introduction when some orthography improvements take place. In fact, the orthography of some words changes from time to time. It is not communicated to us as instructors when changes are made. I also doubt if writers of the books are qualified to develop sound curriculum materials.”*

When a probing question on whether they were invited to specific workshops or meetings where the MTE-related issues were discussed, CTP-2 said the following:

*“We hear that orthography changes and improvements are done in workshops, but we have never been invited to the meeting and neither are we communicated about the change and improvement at all.”*

The responses of participants from colleges of teacher education is similar to those responses of the participants that are actual schoolteachers in that both groups of participants feel that adequate awareness is not offered to the community, the primary teacher training is not well designed to enable graduate teachers to be effective in teaching the mother tongue and there is no adequate support provided by the government and the college of education.

#### **5.5.6 Summary of the Responses from Teacher Education College Instructors**

The response of the two CTE instructors are summarised as follows:

- They disclosed that community members would like their children to learn in English and Amharic rather than in the mother tongue because of lack of understanding the basic importance of MTE.
- They claimed that they themselves had not been trained to teach mother tongue or in mother tongue and had not been provided with training to be well acquainted with recent developments in the orthography of the various mother tongues.
- The CTE instructors explained that there was inadequate support provided for MTE promotion and development in the CTE.
- They commented that the languages (mother tongue) need to develop scientific terminology and academic vocabulary that would enable children to learn concepts that would help them during transition to another Mol.
- The educators expressed appreciation for the opportunity given to these languages and suggested the need for frequent follow-up and improvement.
- They also claimed that all the orthography improvements and language changes should be communicated to them and they expressed that they want to be invited to be participants in the orthography improvement and change.

### 5.5.7 Results from FGDs in Heterogeneous Groupings

The questions raised during the FGDs were general ones that focused on the communities' perception about their children learning in mother tongue. In addition, there were some questions that dealt with administrative issues and support provided to the school specifically to enhance the MTE programme. More importantly, probing questions were raised to obtain better information regarding all aspects of the programme.

There were mixed opinions and views from the community's side about the advantage of MTE. Some of the FGD participants were also sceptical and did not understand the importance of MTE except the advantage of their language being used as written language.

The first question asked, was: **“What do you personally feel about children learning in mother tongue?”**

Almost all participants responded to this question in such a way that everyone in the community including themselves was happy that their language was being treated equally to other languages of the country. However, they were not sure if it was important for the educational achievement of their children.

DFG-2 explained the following:

*“I am raising my hand because this question is important. As most of us said earlier, we are happy that our language is given equal status with other languages; however, still the children are not good in reading and writing in English and in the Amharic language. So, I don't think learning the languages they speak at home will help them in their further education and in the world of work. However, the community feels that equity is maintained because of the right given to our language to be the language of literature of course.”*

Another FGD participant at Kontta, KFG-2, responded similarly when the first question was asked.



*“I personally understand that children learning in their language without doubt is important for their concept development and achievement of lessons. However, their parents need to understand why and how the mother tongue is important. Because, some parents still doubt the importance of mother tongue and they are in favour of English and the Amharic languages.”*

The responses given by a number of participants reflected that the community at large and the parents of children were not aware of the importance of the MTB MLE for children’s education at the beginning level when they enter school for the first time. This goes with what Ball (2011), Wolff (2011) and Malone (2010, 2016) (section 3.5.2) point out regarding the importance of continuous awareness raising about the importance of MTE that should be done in the community. Similarly, Wolff (in Ouane & Glanz, 2011:53) contends that it is only in the expert circle where the importance of MTB MLE has been understood while the community is not aware of the significance. In the same vein, Malone’s model (Malone, 2016:11) of successful MTB MLE deals with the need of awareness raising as one of the components for the accomplishment in the successful MTB MLE.

The participants were also specifically asked about the views of other parents and other community members regarding the importance of MTE. The members of the various FGDs said that there should have been strong awareness raising events conducted to make the community members aware of the importance. When asked the question: **“How do parents and the community members at large view the importance of MTE?”**, the following answers were given:

DFG-5-A stated:

*“I mean... you know, they feel that the best way for learning modern education is English language. They don’t understand why mother tongue is important. More than that they say their language is spoken only in their vicinity and no more. In most instances, parents feel that children will get a job if they learn in English and Amharic rather than in a local language.”*

KFG-3 agreed:

*“Since modern education concepts are tied to English and Amharic language learning, I think the perception of the majority of parents is not fully positive towards MTE. This is because of misunderstanding. They are not told why it is necessary in the beginning. In fact, all community members including those who have children at school are not happy for having their languages at this level.”*

These participants clearly indicated that if greater awareness were provided to the community members, the MTE would have been successful, and children would have achieved better knowledge since the contribution of the community towards children’s education means a lot.

With regard to the implementation of MTE in their areas, the interviewees opined that due support was not being provided and they said there was no follow-up for the successful implementation of the mother-tongue education programme.

A school director participant at FGD (KFG-3) expressed his worries as follows:

*“One big problem is a lack of support. For example, for Kontta area there is no teachers’ training college. Trainees go to distant areas in search of CTE. Most of them go to Arbaminch CTE which is very far from here. Parents can’t afford to pay for their expenses. In schools also, there is no professional development support given for teachers. The government should have established a nearby institution for this particular community.”*

A similar response was given by a parent representative (DFG-B-2):

*“I wish government representatives could visit our area so that they feel that we have not treated as equally as other language groups regarding education supply. Children always complain about not having books to read and carryout homework assignments.”*

In answer to the question: **“How do you measure the support and implementation of MTE by the government at various levels?”**, DFG-A-3 (the director of one of the primary schools) reported the following:

*“There is a good achievement in bringing the language to this level in general with all its drawbacks. One of the biggest problems is that we don’t have trained teachers. We just assign teachers who are trained either in Amharic or in English if their period load is not big. If there are no such teachers, we just assign other teachers who are good native speakers. Otherwise, there are no specifically trained teachers for mother-tongue teaching or to teach other subjects in the mother tongue. The other big problem is also lack of mother-tongue materials. I mean particularly while other books are somehow available, mother-tongue materials and references are highly unavailable.”*

KFG-4 explained:

*“You know the problems are a lot. Students do not give due respect to the mother-tongue teachers...They say that they know the language well or even better than the teachers specially when they are at Grade 3 and 4 level... I have a note I took from a student whom I asked why he behaves in a bad manner towards his mother-tongue teacher and the note says that she (the teacher) has no competence and her orthography skill is low and sometimes she struggles to read and write in the language.”*

The response indicates lack of proper training for the teachers in such a way that if the teachers had adequate training in mother tongue, they would have shown better skills and knowledge than the children in the mother-tongue teaching and learning process.

In answer to the question: **“What kind of follow-up and support is being offered to strengthen the mother-tongue education programme?”**, KFG-3 expressed his worries as follows:

*“One big problem is a lack of support. For example, for Kontta area there is no teachers’ training college (CTE). Trainees go to distant areas in search of CTE. Most of them go to Arbaminch CTE which is very far from here. Parents cannot afford to pay for their expenses. In schools, also there is no professional development support given for teachers. The government should have established a nearby institution for this particular community.”*

A similar response was given by a parents’ representative, DFG-B-2:

*“I wish the government representatives could visit our area so that they feel that we have not been treated as equally as other language groups regarding education supply. Children always complain about not having books to read and carry out homework assignments.”*

According to the various responses from both the individual interviews and FGDs, it seems that the government was not providing the necessary support to the programme

as it should. This means that in spite of a policy statement in place, the actual practice was different from what is said in the policy.

A question was raised about the provision of learning materials in the mother tongue and the interviewees commented that there was no adequate mother-tongue materials provision.

KFG-4 said:

*“I usually hear children complaining for lack of books and I see them borrowing from each other in the neighbourhood.”*

DFG-B-1 reported that:

*“The main problem I see is lack of sufficient mother-tongue materials. The scarcity of mother-tongue materials is greater than the scarcity of other materials. I also doubt the quality since I don’t think the people who prepare books are capable in that regard as well .... I once travelled to another school that was far, like 30 kilometres from us, looking for a mother-tongue mathematics book to borrow and to photocopy as we did not even have a single book.”*

The FGD participants gave different opinions about the implementation of MTE. They commented that it was good that the language had come to this level but there was inadequate support to enhance the programme. They also indicated that they were worried that their children would not have sufficient knowledge and skills in other school languages at the expense of MTE unless teachers are provided with adequate training.

As indicated in the literature review (section 3.5.2), the responses provided by the participants confirmed what was said by Malone (2010, 2016), Skutnabb (2012) and Ball (2011) who discuss the major components of success in MTE. According to them, teacher training, materials provision and adequate support from both the community and the government are crucial.

### **5.5.8 Summary of the Responses from FGD Participants**

- All participants acknowledged and appreciated that their language had been given the status of being a language that has a written form.
- They felt that even though their children were learning in their mother tongue, they had not shown good progress in learning the English and Amharic languages.
- They claimed that English and Amharic were important for the children's future jobs.
- They reported that there was no CTE in their area.
- They explained their reservations regarding the knowledge and skills of the teachers to teach mother tongue.
- They explained the big challenge regarding the scarcity of MTE materials.
- They claimed that the support provided to strengthen MTB MLE was not as good as expected.

Accordingly, the FGD participants perceived that MTE helps their children and they understood that it is a respect offered to their identity and culture. However, the implementation of the programme had not been done well because of the shortage of materials and lack of proper training of mother-tongue teachers.

## **5.5 THEMES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

The responses from the interviews and FGDs were triangulated in such a way that the responses from different groups of participants that reflect similar or different perceptions were compared and contrasted in the analysis. The data from each group of participants were examined and similar codes and categories were merged together to create themes related to the study as a whole (as shown in Figure 5.1).

The themes arising from the data that was collected from the participants align well with the goals of constructivism. Looking at the responses of the participants about the implementation of MBT MLE in their areas, Creswell and Poth's (2017:21) view about constructivism is taken into consideration. The authors state that constructivist researchers look at the interaction among persons within the contexts in which they work to understand their historical and cultural settings.

### **5.5.9 Discussion of the Themes arising from the Study**

#### **5.5.9.1 Theme 1 – Awareness raising on the importance MTB MLE for the public at large**

This theme was identified from both individual interviews and the FGDs. The response provided to this theme addresses the research question: “What and how do the community and all other stakeholders perceive the advantage of primary school children learning in mother tongue?”

The objective relating to this theme is: “To investigate, identify and analyse the perceptions and understandings of stakeholders regarding MTE in the primary school.”

In both the individual interviews and the FGDs, participants were asked what and how they view MTB MLE being applied in the country in general and in the minority language areas in particular. The majority of the participants said that the policy offered to promote MTE in the country in general and in the minority language areas like theirs was acceptable and useful as it gave recognition to languages that had not been given official status previously. They said that it had excellent political implications with regard to maintaining equity and respect to ethnical identity. They appreciated the opportunity given to their languages to be treated equally to other languages that had been used for writing and reading in Ethiopia.

However, there were a number of participants of the study who responded that the perception of the community in letting children learn in their native language was not as positive as expected. When I inquired about the reason and the justification why parents wanted their children to be taught in English and Amharic, the participants explained that their children’s future job opportunities relied on their children’s knowledge of and skill in English and Amharic. They disclosed that MTE was only important in their areas.

A reflection on this kind of perception of MTE by area was stated in section 3.5.1, where Utne and Skattum (2009:105) note that the use and the promotion of multilingual education is not to reject national or international languages for wider communication. It is rather to enable children to have better results in learning in local languages, the

official language as well as international languages. By the same token, Pinnock et al. (2011:8) explain that the core issue of MTE is to let the children understand an idea in a language in which they think and communicate so that they learn the first language words for that idea and this could help them to learn the second or third language easily. When one looks at Vygotsky's theory on the Zone of Proximal Development and his ideas on scaffolding, this could mean that when children know concepts in their first language, it could help them to bridge the gap when they are expected to understand the concepts in a second language (Moya, 2019:167).

As can be seen from the responses of the participants, the answer to the research question **“How do the community at large and, other stakeholders perceive children's learning in mother tongue at primary school?”** was fully provided in such a way that the perceptions of the community and the stakeholders were generally negative because awareness raising and promotional work had not been done before instituting MTE in minority language areas.

Several participants noted that there was a lack of awareness among community members regarding the importance of their children learning in mother tongue. However, all community members appreciated the opportunity for their language to be used as written language.

Thus, it calls for greater effort in creating awareness in the community so that members of the community as well as all other stakeholders take part in the use and success of MTE.

#### 5.5.9.2 Theme 2 – Equity of all languages in Ethiopia

Almost all participants during the individual interviews and the FGDs explained and appreciated that the opportunity for the minority languages to be used as school languages showed that there was a policy of equity among languages in the country. They confirmed that the identity of the minority language speakers had been respected. However, a number of teachers and the community members believed that MTB MLE was important for maintaining equity of languages rather than supporting children's educational achievement. These beliefs and opinions relate to what was discussed in



section 3.5.4.9. Brisk et al. (2015:4) indicate that one of the key principles of MLE is affirming linguistic and cultural identities to enable the language community to make use of their resources. Atkin (2011:2) (section 3.7) also states that education that takes diversity and minority communities into account plays an important role in creating sufficient knowledge and understanding for mutual coexistence. To that end, the responses from the participants regarding their language being considered as a language of education were in line with the literature.

In section 3.5.5.4, Weber (2013:3) states that the equality of relationship between majority and minority language use is ensured by avoiding the dominance of one over the other. As the participants indicated their languages had come to the point of being used and treated equally and this had created significant support to the education policy that also states that promoting the use of their language is essential. This response also answers the research question “What and how do the community and all other stakeholders perceive the advantage of primary school children learning in mother tongue?”

#### 5.5.9.3 Theme 3 – Proper training of teachers to teach in mother tongue

Several participants including the teachers themselves explained that they were not offered the necessary training to teach in mother tongue or mother tongue as a subject. This explanation was also confirmed by a finding of a study by Tefera et al. (2018:39) conducted in the preparation of Ethiopian Education Development Road Map.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012:274) (section 3.5.1) discuss the necessity for teacher training in preservice and in-service education programmes. They contend that teachers who have been trained in a dominant language will have difficulty with knowledge of terminologies in their mother tongue.

This theme relates to the research question that deals with the strategies and plans to implement MTB MLE. The research question reads: “How is the mother-tongue education policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?” The objective that relates to this theme is the objective that states: “To

assess whether the MTE is being implemented according to the education and training policy.”

Both the research question and the objective require answers about the qualifications and training of teachers and about the implementation plan. Among the major factors that contribute to the success of MTB MLE is the strategic plan designed to support and to offer sufficient training to classroom teachers, as well as the preparation of well-designed curriculum and teaching materials. The education and training policy also stipulates the need for training teachers in the respective language of the area:

Teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education, will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction, through preservice and in-service training. The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area (MoE, 1994:23).

Though the education and training policy says this, the implementation has not been done as can be seen in the feedback of the participants in this study. The participants who taught the mother tongue were asked various questions about whether they were trained in the necessary teaching methodologies and skills of mother-tongue instruction. According to the majority of the participants, they had not been provided sufficient training and, in some instances, no training in the mother tongue at all.

Participants were also asked what problems they came across as a result for not being trained in the mother tongue, and many of them responded that, although they had made progress regarding understanding the orthography, it had been difficult to understand in the beginning. Obviously, teachers who do not understand or know the reading and writing of the language, do not teach it at all. As indicated in section 3.9, teachers should be fluent in both the reading and writing skills of the language in which they teach.

According to Trudell et al. (2008:15) (section 3.9), teaching in the mother tongue and the mother tongue as a subject should not be done in the same way as teaching in an unfamiliar language is done. Teachers need training in different approaches and must be well equipped and fluent in reading and writing in the mother tongue. In other words,

being a native speaker of the language is not enough to teach a mother tongue as a subject or in mother tongue. The need for a change in attitude regarding the MTE is significant: teachers and all school communities must develop positive attitudes about the value of the use of the local mother tongue in schools.

A number of interviewees confirmed that because of the interest they had in teaching in their mother tongue, they had been exerting great effort to acquaint themselves with the orthography and were thus at the level of reading and writing the language better than when they first began teaching.

CTE participants were also asked whether the trainee teachers were trained in their mother tongue to enable them to teach all primary school subjects in their mother tongue. The participants explained that the trainees were not trained in their mother tongue though they were entitled to teach mother tongue or in mother tongue.

During the FGDs, directors and other members confirmed that the lack of trained mother-tongue teachers remained a problem but that the recognition given to the language as a language of instruction is a great achievement. The responses show that, although the home languages of the various language groups in Ethiopia have been given better status than before, the implementation to prepare teachers and management has been inadequate. The plan and the strategy to apply mother-tongue instruction have not been given significant attention. For successful implementation of MTB MLE, simply having a good policy in place is not sufficient. As Malone (2010:11) (section 3.5.2) mentions, among the components for successful MTB MLE, the need for well-trained teachers is vital. Furthermore, motivated teachers who understand the importance of MTB MLE for children's further educational achievement are needed for effective teaching and learning of the children.

In the individual interviews with teachers and the teacher educators, as well as with the directors in the FGD, it was obvious that in many minority area schools, teachers were not trained to teach mother tongue as a subject or in mother tongue. It can be confirmed that teachers were assigned to teach in their mother tongue without a specific qualification in this field. It seems that there was no plan to train teachers before

implementing the MTB MLE. This means that the programme lacks one of the major components of successful MTB MLE, namely, the professionalisation of the teachers (section 3.9). In this regard, Mekonnen et al. (2018:23) note the fact that primary schoolteachers in sub-Saharan countries are not provided with adequate and effective training to teach the school curriculum. They contend that until recently there were insufficient written materials that deal with how student teachers should carry out their professional tasks.

In general, the minority language area mother-tongue teachers have not been provided with training so as to be effective teachers. The responses show that teachers are assigned to teach any kind of subject in the mother tongue simply because they know and speak the language, or they are native speakers of the language.

The findings and discussions stated above indicate that the research question that reads “How are the mother-tongue education policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?” was answered through the participants’ responses and explanations. It was found that in certain minority language areas, in most cases, primary school mother-tongue teachers were not trained to the level to be efficient teachers in the respective mother-tongue languages.

#### 5.5.9.4 Theme 4 – Readiness of the language in relation to orthography and scientific terminology to be used as medium of instruction

This theme is in line with the two of the research questions that deal with the model and principles of MTB MLE as well as the readiness of the languages to be used as a language of instruction. The questions are: **“In what way would the mother tongue help children to better learn other school languages?”** and **“To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as languages of instruction?”**

Almost all participants pointed out that both the minority languages targeted in this study did not have a standardised orthography. Since the questions that relate to this theme were more of a technical and pedagogical nature, they were posed to MoE and CTE participants, as well as mother-tongue teachers during the individual interviews. The questions were not raised with members of the FGDs.

Several participants expressed their concern that the orthography of the two mother tongues had not yet been standardised. Because of this, there were times when different people would write a certain word or phrase in the language using different spelling. Others explained that standard orthography and academic terminologies should be developed to bring these local languages to a better academic language level. This means that the corpus planning discussed in the literature review has not been maintained (section 3.8). Corpus planning refers to modernising terminology of the respective language, as well as standardisation of the grammar and the spelling (Baker, 2006:51).

By the same token, Cahill and Rise (2014:12) (section 3.7.2.3) state that it is imperative have an acceptable alphabet for a language when used as a language of education. The authors emphasise the importance of designing an acceptable orthography that will serve all of language groups even when the language has varieties of dialects. Cummins (2000:55) (section 3.5.5.3) also notes the need to develop languages to the level of CALP which refers to the preparedness, development and adequacy of the language to be used as school language.

There were probing questions raised under this theme. One tenet of MTB MLE is that children who begin schooling in their mother tongue should be capable of learning another school language more easily. To that end, one of the probing questions that was raised in relation to the adequacy of the mother tongue in helping children learn better was: **“In what way would the mother tongue help children to learn other school languages better?”**

A number of participants explained their concerns about the confusion of similar scripts and different sounds created in relations to the English scripts that have similar shape but different sounds as that of the Latin script used for a mother tongue. As Heugh (2011:) (section 3.5.4.9) discusses, the early-exit or subtractive model does not help children’s concept development and transfer of skills. She calls it a weak bilingual model where the objective is to move the learners from the home language or first language into the second language as an Mol as early as possible. Weber (2014: 8) (section 3.5.5.2) indicates, a late-exit or additive multilingual education model is key in

developing both minority and majority languages so as to provide children with a better education and greater chances of acceptable achievement later in the schooling.

In general, most of the participants explained their concerns about the languages spoken in the two areas being fully ready to be used as Mol. They explained that though there was no question about the advantage of learning and teaching in a mother tongue, the preparation for using the language as an Mol was inadequate. The major factors which arose, were not having sufficient educational materials in the languages, the training of teachers in mother tongue and the preparation of quality curriculum materials developed by trained curriculum developers.

Many scholars in this particular field of study stress the fact that the “late exit” bi/multilingual education has more advantages than the “early-exit” (Cummins, 2000; Heugh, 2011; Weber, 2014) (section 3.5). They call the early-exit model a “weak model” and the “late-exit” model a strong model. This implies that the “early-exit” model which is the case in this study does not help children to master the mother tongue in reading and writing and, even more importantly, to use the language at CALP level. It is likely that neither the children nor the teachers would be able to transfer the skills and concepts of the mother tongue to the foreign language.

Thus, the early-exit model being used was ineffective and, according to the participants, MTE needed to be extended from six to eight years. Some participants also expressed the importance of using the language as a subject at higher education levels.

The responses from this particular theme are in line with the research question: **“How are models and principles of successful MTB MLE being applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia?”** and the research question: **“To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as languages of instruction?”**

The responses from the participants indicated that the MTB MLE programme offers only four years to use mother tongue as a Mol which is an early-exit model. Furthermore, the participants stressed the need to have a standardised orthography as well as the relevant terminology so that children will understand academic concepts in their own

language which will significantly help them when they transit to a second language as the Mol (Weber 2014:8) (section 3.5).

#### 5.5.9.5 Theme 5 – MTE helps children in learning other school languages

Several participants stated that the MTE had not helped children in learning other school languages. The reason for this might be the way in which the MTE was implemented. It includes inadequate teacher training and lack of sufficient mother-tongue materials. Had the policy been properly implemented, the MTE could have been a significant help to children's second language learning (Weber, 2014:8) (section 3.5.4.2).

Despite this, the MTE in the minority areas in this study has not helped the children to learn other languages offered at school.

#### 5.5.9.6 Theme 6 – Availability and quality of materials

This theme relates to the research question: **“How is the MTE policy applied in supporting the minority language areas in Ethiopia?”** This question deals with many aspects related to the implementation of the MTB MLE programme; therefore one of the major questions that resulted in creating this theme during the individual interviews and the FGDs was: **“What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using the mother tongue?”**

Almost all participants mentioned the scarcity of teaching and learning materials in the mother tongue. The responses indicate that there is no proper support and follow-up provided for the mother-tongue programme except simply proclaiming that schools should teach in mother tongue. Obviously without proper availability of curriculum materials, children's educational achievement will be poor.

Obviously, the quality of books and access to various materials to be used not only as textbooks in classrooms but also as reference materials for both children and teachers has significant advantages for better achievement in education. However, from the responses of the participants about the availability and quality of materials, it was understood that there was a significant shortage of books which could be a critical

problem in the teaching and learning arena. Needless to say, there is a great need in the Ethiopian education system for an adequate number of materials for children to read and for teachers to refer to. Without a sufficient range of learning and reading materials, children will not be able to learn effectively as they should, and teachers will be in a difficult position to provide adequate knowledge as well.

The participants discussed their concern about the quality of the books which are available since the books are prepared by people who have no experience in curriculum materials development. They also opined that though they are asked to evaluate the books and give feedback, the feedback they provided had never been incorporated to improve the quality of the books.

All strong and successful MTB MLE programmes should give prominence to curriculum materials development (Malone, 2010:8) (section 3.5.2). Materials are core components for the success and better achievement of children's education. Without proper and well-prepared teaching and learning materials or well-trained teachers to use them, success in educational achievement would be considerably hampered.

The responses from which this theme was developed, relate to the research question: **“How is the MTE policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?”** The question was answered since the provision of education materials directly relates to implementation of the policy in place.

#### 5.5.9.7 Theme 7 – Availability of guidelines and strategies to carry out the MTB MLE programme

The questions from which this theme was developed were asked in the interviews with the MoE participants and the college instructors. The following major question was asked followed by various probing questions: **“What kind of guideline or strategy document is there to help proper implementation of the programme?”**

As seen from the responses as discussed above in Section 5.4.1, there is no implementation plan or strategy except the overall policy that allows for local languages to be used as languages of instruction. Many scholars in the field, however, posit the



great importance of well-designed guidelines and strategies for the successful implementation of education in the mother tongue. Unfortunately, many African countries fail in developing effective strategies that are relevant to the education system (Ouane & Glanz, 2010:53) (section 3.4). It is the guidelines and the strategies that provide recommendations about which type and model of MTB MLE a country should use, as well as the method that leads to the transfer and transitioning from the first to the second language.

From all the responses as discussed in section 5.4.5, it can be seen that the biggest problem for not having a successful mother-tongue programme is the lack of planning and well-designed teaching strategies. Obviously, failure in planning and implementation of strategies for a certain programme will lead to unsuccessful outcomes.

In general, the programme lacks one of the most important components of successful MTB MLE which has been indicated in the model of the components i.e. the realistic implementation plan (section 3.9). A clear and realistic plan is essential for developing a programme that achieves the goals as set out by its stakeholders.

#### 5.5.9.8 Theme 8 – Support and follow-up of the programme

This is a theme that refers to monitoring and evaluation of the programme and relates to the research question: **“What kind of follow-up, support and monitoring strategy is in place?”**

The model of successful MTB MLE stipulates the need for monitoring and evaluation of the programme. To that end, a number of teachers, directors and CTE instructors explained their discouragement and emphasised the lack of follow-up and proper guidelines from the government side at all levels of administrative structure; i.e. from central level to lower district level.

They explained that once teachers of MTE in minority language areas are assigned to the school, they are not given any upgrading or short-term training specifically to support this new initiative in the schools. This should be repeatedly done since it is a

new experience for teachers. They need continuous professional development to keep them up to date with the latest developments in the field. The programme of professional development of teachers has brought about changes in various aspects of teachers' knowledge, skills and behaviour in other regions (Hadar & Brody 2016:51) (section 3.9). On the other hand, teachers' continuous professional development has also proved to be important in changing teacher's knowledge, skills and behaviour towards their teaching profession.

The responses of almost all participants about this theme indicated that there is no follow-up and professional development provision for the mother-tongue teachers in these areas. Many of the teachers who were assigned to teach mother tongue as a subject or other subjects in mother tongue are not trained or have not been given professional development. Moreover, teacher educators in the CTEs assigned to train the mother-tongue teachers for primary schools have not been given any type of training including professional development. They are assigned only because they are native speakers of the language and they are trained to teach English. This means that what the policy states and what is being implemented to fulfil the policy are not in agreement. The policy reads:

Teachers starting from kindergarten to higher education, will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competency in the media of instruction, through preservice and in-service training The language of teacher training for kindergarten and primary education will be the nationality language used in the area (MoE, 1994:23).

Though not dealt with in detail as done during the individual interviews, I raised a similar question regarding the support and follow-up from the government side particularly with regard to MTE during the FGD as well. As discussed in Section 5.4.5, there was a total lack of support.

According to the various responses from both the individual interviews and FGDs, it can be deduced that the government was not providing the necessary support for the programme as it should. This means that in spite of the policy being in place, the actual practice differs.

The responses from the participants presented different themes that were aligned with the research questions and objectives of the study. The eight themes that arose from the feedback of the different groups of respondents are captured in the figure below.

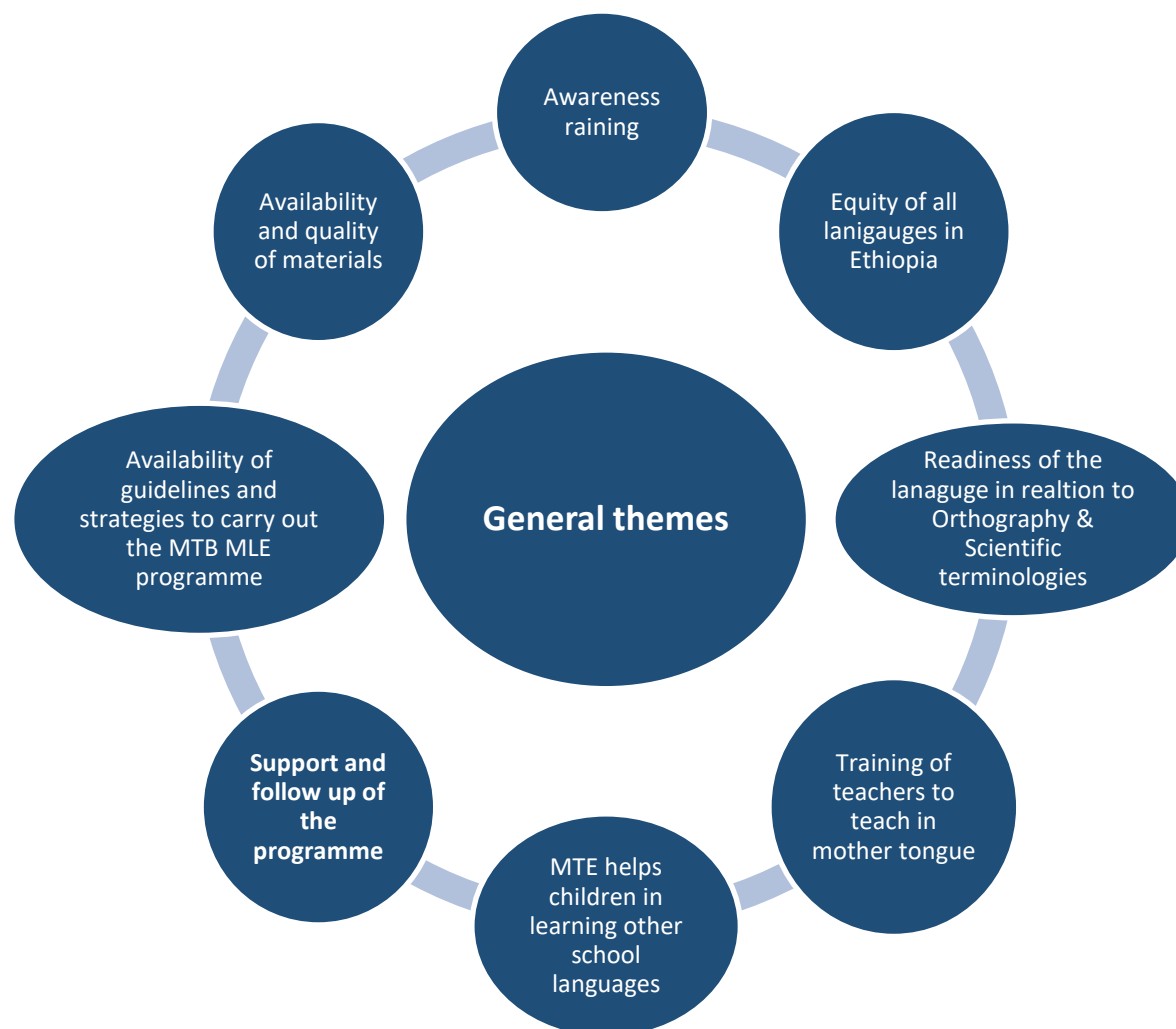


Figure 5.1: Emerging themes

## 5.6 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Having indicated the relevant research questions for each of the themes developed from the participants' responses, the research questions raised in this study have been well addressed.

The main research question read: **“What are the major challenges of MTB MLE in primary schools of minority languages areas in the Southern region in Ethiopia?”**

This was a generic question and was addressed by almost all themes developed.



The sub-questions are restated here and are the following:

- How do the community at large and other stakeholders perceive children's learning in mother tongue at primary school?
- How is the mother-tongue education policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?
- How are models and principles of successful MTB MLE being applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia?
- To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as language of instruction?
- What kind of follow-up, support and monitoring strategy is in place?

It can be concluded that every sub-question was addressed as discussed in the following sections.

#### **5.6.1 Sub-Question 1**

##### **How do the community at large and other stakeholders perceive children's learning in mother tongue at primary school?**

The findings indicated that the community and other stakeholders appreciate and have positive views towards the MTE because their languages are being given equal status and becoming languages that can be used in literature. They felt that their identity and culture were being recognised. However, the community pointed out that the English and Amharic lessons should be given more emphasis as their children's future job prospects depended on their knowledge and skills in English and Amharic languages. This means that children need to have the knowledge of language of wider communication at international level (English) and that of language of wider communication at national level (Amharic). In general, the research sub-question was addressed under Theme 1.

### **5.6.2 Sub-Question 2**

**How are the MTE policy and its strategies being applied in the minority language areas in Ethiopia?**

This research question was also addressed by all participants and was captured in Themes 2 to 8 though the core of the research question was captured under Theme 7. It is a question that deals with implementation of the policy which is an overarching issue. The individual interview and FGD participants raised the shortcomings related to the implementation of the policy. The fact that the research question encompasses both technical and administrative tasks was an issue raised by all participants.

### **5.6.3 Sub-Questions 3 and 4**

**Question 3: How are models and principles of successful MTB MLE being applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia?**

**Question 4: To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as language of instruction?**

These two sub-questions addressed more technical and pedagogical aspects and most of the responses were captured from the interviews with teachers, teacher educators and MoE experts. The questions encompassed various facets of the components and principles of successful MTB MLE in minority language areas (section 3.3.2.).

The findings are captured under Themes 3, 4 and 5. These themes deal with lack of proper qualifications which resulted in the inadequacy of the programme to help children in learning other school languages, as well as the need to work on the suitability of the languages to be used as school languages. It was shown that neither the actual teachers nor the teacher educators at CTE were properly qualified to teach in mother tongue or to train mother-tongue teachers, respectively. They were not acquainted with the principles and models of MTE. It was also pointed out under Theme 4 that MTE could help children to learn other languages. This could be considered of importance in mother-tongue education (section 3.3.1).

As far as research question 4: **“To what extent are the minority languages ready to be used as languages of instruction?”** is concerned, it was found that one of the components of successful MTE which relates to the readiness of the language to be used as Mol was not sufficiently attained. The issue embedded in this research question was also addressed under Theme 5.

#### **5.6.4 Sub-Question 5**

##### **What kind of follow-up, support and monitoring strategy is in place?**

Sub-question 5 was also addressed in almost all the responses. The participants in both the individual interviews and the FGD discussions raised the problem of inadequate support from the government and other relevant stakeholders' side. The theme in which this particular research question is addressed is Theme 7. However, the question is broad, and it was dealt with in every theme since follow-up and support also calls for aspects such as training, awareness and provision of teaching and learning materials.

As can be seen from the discussion the main research question and all the sub-questions were addressed in the research.

#### **5.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In Chapter 5, I presented the responses from the interviews and FGDs with the participants and the information leading to the eight themes. All the themes were developed from the transcribed data of individual interviews and FGDs. The findings under each theme showed the existing gaps and drawbacks in the arena of mother-tongue teaching and learning in selected minority languages areas in the SNNPRS. The findings indicated that more support is needed from different stakeholders such as the Federal MoE and all other branches of the Ministry at all levels in the education sector. To that end, various kinds of support are needed including awareness raising, strengthened and context-focused preservice and in-service teacher training, adequate materials provision, quality materials development, clear planning and strategies and professional development. It also called for a well-developed strategy in relation to which MTB MLE principles and models to follow and apply, such as an additive (late-

exit) and subtractive (early-exit) bi/multilingual model. The responses indicated that the proper guidance, support and follow-up are not provided. It also disclosed that the principles and models for successful MTB MLE have not been applied.

In the next chapter, the conclusions, the summary and the recommendations of the study are discussed.



## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The importance of mother-tongue-based multilingual education remains indisputable for children's learning as learning cannot happen without a language they speak and hear on a daily basis. To that end, this study tried to indicate the importance and showed the drawbacks encountered in the implementation of MTB MLE in minority language areas in the southern region in Ethiopia. The study focused on two minority language areas called Dawuro and Kontta which are located in the Southern Nation and Nationality People's Regional State (SNNPRS). The major focus of the study was on the perceptions of teacher trainers, parents, teachers and the community at large about their children's learning in their local language. It also investigated the status of the implementation in relation to the education and training policy statement provided by the government. This chapter therefore summarises the findings of the study and provides conclusions and recommendations.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY IN GENERAL**

The main purpose of this study was to explore the challenges and drawbacks encountered by education experts, teachers, parents and relevant stakeholders in implementing the mother tongue as a subject and as the medium of instruction (Mol) in primary schools of Grades 1–4 in minority language areas of the SNNPRS with reference to the Dawuro and Kontta languages. The study focused on these two selected minority language areas of the region that had already developed their orthography compared to the other regions in Ethiopia where the minority languages had not been developed. These two language areas are located near each other and the languages are mutually intelligible which means that the speakers of the two languages can communicate with each other without difficulty. Chapter 2 provided a brief overview of the history of education in Ethiopia through the many religious and political dispensations since the 4th century AD with a focus on the languages that were used in education and political life.

### **6.2.1 The Literature Review**

Chapter 3 of the study focused on the concept of the MTB MLE as discussed and explained by scholars of this particular discipline. It also explored the scientific application that should be considered in implementing MTB MLE for its success and effective applications especially in minority language areas. It discussed the need for considering the language policy and the language planning in a given country so as to maintain the proper procedure and process of MTE. To that end, the literature review provided an assessment of the status of language policy, as well as the education and training policy of Ethiopia. The context in which the MTB MLE programme was implemented and what various studies had found were reviewed. The theoretical framework focused on the social constructivist or the interpretivist philosophical foundation. The literature review presented and adapted the model developed by Malone (2010:16) which deals with the ten essential components of successful MTB MLE.

### **6.2.2 The Research Methodology**

The study applied a qualitative method using two of the major qualitative method data-collection instruments, namely, interviews and focus groups. Before the actual data collection was carried out, the data-collection instruments were tested through a pilot study conducted in other language groups that had similar language status and where the mother tongues were being used as an Mol. The instruments were amended and improved based on the feedback from the pilot study (section 5.2.6). In the actual data collection, 23 MTB MLE teachers from five schools of the two language areas were interviewed and the responses of 13 teachers were qualitatively analysed (Chapter 5, section 5.5) having applied the saturation principle (section 4.4.2). Three heterogeneous FGDs were conducted in which parents, community leaders, school directors, teachers' and student representatives were involved.

The data were audio-recorded and were transcribed in the Amharic language and the key points were translated into English for interpretation and analysis (See Appendix O).

### **6.3 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The study found the following eight major themes established from the interviews and FGDs. The themes were created by using triangulation to verify information from one group of participants with another group.

- A lack of adequate awareness raising about MTE;
- Inadequate teachers training to teach in a mother tongue;
- Readiness of the minority languages to be used as academic language;
- Lack of mother-tongue materials in schools;
- Lack of proper guideline and strategy to teach a mother tongue and in a mother tongue; and
- Lack of adequate follow-up and support.

#### **6.3.1 Lack of Awareness Raising**

The study indicated that because of lack of sufficient awareness raising that should have been given to all the community members and practitioners, there are still misunderstandings about the use of the mother tongue as a school language. Blackwood, Lanza and Woldemariam (2016:125) note the importance of knowledge and the correct attitude of the society towards the minority languages to be used for instruction as one of the essential factors that should be considered by language policy developers. As far as responses gathered from participants are concerned, the status given to the minority languages as written languages and languages of literature indicates that the identity of the community that owns the language is respected. However, some members of the community still believe that learning in English is the best way to get a proper education. Thus, the study found that this perception emanates from lack of proper awareness.

#### **6.3.2 Inadequate Teachers Training to Teach in Mother Tongue**

In every education institution, the skill and knowledge of teachers play a decisive role in the achievement of the learners at all levels. As far as this study is concerned, one of the findings is that many of the mother-tongue teachers in the minority language areas

have not been provided with adequate training that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach the mother tongue. Moreover, the findings indicate that some teachers are being assigned to teach subjects which they have not been trained for. They are assigned to teach the mother tongue simply because they are native speakers of that mother tongue.

### **6.3.3 Readiness of the Minority Languages to be used as Academic Language**

It was discussed in Chapter 3 that children learning in their mother tongue instead of in other languages that they do not speak and hear often, achieve far better education outcomes than those who learn in a language they do not speak. However, unless a particular language is ready to be used at a CALP level, it will not be successful. The study showed (section 3.7.2) that there are some drawbacks that should be improved for the target minority languages to be fully used as languages for academic purpose.

### **6.3.4 Lack of Mother-Tongue Materials in Schools**

Needless to say, the provision of the appropriate educational materials for children in school remains one of the decisive factors for the children's proper learning and educational achievement. However, the study indicated that there was a scarcity of educational materials in general and especially for those materials in mother tongue. It was shown that children do not have an adequate supply of reading and writing materials for their studies.

### **6.3.5 Lack of Proper Guidelines and Strategy**

The study showed that neither teachers nor college instructors have been introduced to any kind of guidelines or strategy that informs teachers on the proper implementation of the mother-tongue programme. The participants from the MoE indicated that lack of any kind of guideline has been one of the biggest drawbacks of the MTB MLE that is taking place in the country as whole and in the minority language areas in particular.

### **6.3.6 Lack of Adequate Follow-Up and Support**

Follow-up and support provided for any type of programme is pivotal to success. To ensure success in an education programme, a well-structured follow-up and support plan should be in place for its effective outcome. However, the MTB MLE programme in minority language areas of the SNNPRS as indicated by the participants in this study does not have adequate follow-up and support.

## **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

One of the major limitations of the study was its failure to look into more minority languages in the region because of resource and time constraints. Another limitation is that data from other participants such as regional and zonal institutions could have been collected had there been sufficient time and a budget for it.

With all its limitations, however, the findings are consistent with the objectives of the research and its research questions. The following were the objectives of the research. An indication of where these objectives were addressed is provided in brackets:

- To investigate, identify and analyse the perceptions and understandings of stakeholders such as mother-tongue teachers, teacher educators, MoE experts, community members and the parents regarding mother-tongue-based multilingual education in primary schools in minority language areas (section 5.4).
- To explore whether the principles and components of MTE are applied in minority language areas in Ethiopia (section 5.5.2)
- To explore the overall MTB MLE challenges faced by minority languages in the SNNPRS (section 5.4.1, 5.4.3, 5.4.5, 5.4.7).
- To assess whether the MTE is being implemented according to the education and training policy (section 5.5.3)
- To assess the extent of the support and follow-up provided to strengthen the MTB MLE in minority areas of the southern region (section 5.5.4).

As can be deduced from the above all the research objectives were attained

## **6.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The data interpretation and analysis were treated in eight major themes and sub-themes that answered the research questions stated and addressed the objectives envisioned.

Though the idea of MTB MLE has been accepted by most of the stakeholders, the study revealed that adequate awareness raising has not been provided by the concerned bodies of the education sector at different levels. As a result, many stakeholders have doubts about its importance. In this regard, many community members and parents would prefer their children to be taught in Amharic or in English than being taught in their own regional language, although they have a positive attitude towards their language and are proud that it is also used as a language of literature. They feel that one of the factors that identifies them as a group has been respected.

The study also indicated the quality of teachers to teach in a mother tongue as the Mol is very low as the teachers were not given appropriate training before being assigned as teachers of mother tongue as a subject or the mother tongue as the Mol in other subjects. Most teachers in the two minority language areas who participated in the study explained that they were not provided with any type of mother-tongue teaching methodology or language skills training. Some of the teachers assigned to teach mother tongue as a subject or other subjects in mother tongue were from different fields of study such as health and physical education (sport) or aesthetics (drawing or crafting).

The study also indicated that the target languages of this study do not have a standardised orthography and the languages have thus been used without being ready to be used as academic languages. The study found that both the insufficiency of the curriculum materials and the capacity of curriculum materials developers were problems.

One of the major findings of the study was that there are no guidelines which could provide strategies for implementing MTB MLE in a scientific way. Because of this, the programme lacks a plan on how to move from mother tongue as the Mol to English as the Mol at the end of Grade 4. Moreover, the programme does not have any supporting

documents for the early-exit multilingual education model (section 3.4.4.1). In other words, children are taught in their mother tongue up to Grade 4 level only which is said to be “early-exit model”. However, literature indicates that children are better taught in their mother tongue for 6 to 8 years before they transit to other school language. This is known as the “late-exit model” (section 3.5.4.2).

The majority of the participants of the study indicated that there is lack of support and follow-up sessions from all levels of the government offices including MoE.

## **6.6 CONCLUSIONS**

The study shows that the promotion and development of MTE in minority language areas is doable because the languages have been given equal status with other languages to be used as a medium of instruction. In this regard, it has been shown to be important as it recognises language identities that are also a reflection of cultural identities. This could help to avoid conflict among the people of different ethnic groups.

However, the study found that the plan, the methodology and the strategy for implementing the MTB MLE in minority language areas remain challenging. The challenges are multifaceted, ranging from lack of providing due awareness raising for stakeholders to lack of proper training provision for the MTB MLE teachers. It was also observed that there were no guidelines or strategies that would inform teachers how to implement the programme.

To that end, it is envisaged that the information collected in this study will contribute towards indicating the problems as well as the way forward to a better solution. The findings and recommendations will show the policy makers, implementers and other stakeholders what to improve in the effort of implementing MTB MLE in minority language areas in general and in the SNNPRS in particular.

## **6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations for the various stakeholders arising from the findings of the study are provided below. Though the recommendations are specific to each of the stakeholders that are involved in MTB MLE implementation in minority language areas in the

SNNPRS, it should be understood that they call for collaborative efforts from each of the stakeholders at different levels.

#### **6.7.1 Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureau**

- The MoE and the Regional Education Bureau (REB) should plan, coordinate and work with all concerned bodies in conducting well-structured and systematised awareness raising about the importance of MTB MLE at all levels, including the teachers, parents and all community members.
- The MoE in collaboration with the REB should develop guidelines to follow up and offer support to schools specifically located in minority language areas. The guidelines need to provide specific instructions for minority language areas which have recently been incorporated as the mother tongue as a language of education.
- The MoE should develop a strategy document that guides teachers on how children can transition from the mother-tongue Mol to another Mol such as Amharic or English.
- The principles of the late-exit (additive model) should be applied which is an important model for the minority language area children to receive the benefits of MTB MLE.
- MoE and REBs should prepare CTEs to provide the trainee primary schoolteachers with proper mother-tongue teaching skills, methodologies and knowledge of transition from mother tongue to a second language.

#### **6.7.2 Recommendations for Colleges of Teacher Education**

- Teacher training colleges need to be consistent with the education and training policy of the country and therefore the medium of instruction for the training of mother-tongue teachers at primary schools should be the specific mother tongue the student teachers are trained for.
- Recruitment of teachers to be trained as mother-tongue teachers should be based on the trainees' interest and need.



- CTEs should provide trainees with proper language skills and pedagogical knowledge of the mother tongue including the orthography of the language in addition to the current mother-tongue teaching methodology.
- CTEs should provide awareness raising workshops for the college community about the importance of MTE.
- Instructors assigned as mother-tongue teacher trainers need to be graduates of the same discipline; i.e. they should be specialised mother-tongue teacher trainers instead of being assigned on the basis of their being native speakers of the language or because they have specialised in English language teaching.
- Educators at CTEs should be able to help trainee teachers with how to bridge the transition from mother tongue to a second-language as Mol.
- Educators at CTEs should help trainee teachers with how to manage languages that have similar scripts / alphabets but different sounds.

### **6.7.3 Recommendation for Schools and School Principals**

- Schools should understand the importance of MTB MLE and consider the advantage of it to create foundational knowledge for the children.
- Teachers should not be assigned to teach mother tongue simply because they are native speakers without having been trained for the purpose.
- Schools should offer awareness raising about mother-tongue education for all teachers so that they understand its importance.
- The need for an evidence-based and scientific transition from mother tongue as the Mol to the official or foreign language instruction in children's lessons is of paramount importance.
- The way of maintaining sustainability of MTB MLE and establishing an organised system to promote MTE is through active monitoring and the use of a follow-up strategy. Thus, the concerned organisations such as MoE and REB should conduct timely monitoring and evaluation of the minority languages used as school languages so as to address the drawbacks in the process.

- It is also imperative to expand the academic terminologies of the minority languages used as languages of instruction so that the languages can achieve academic status.

#### 6.7.4 Recommendation for Parents and Community Members

- Parents and community members should be aware of why MTE is important for their children's educational achievement and they should play a role in the promotion of the programme.
- Parents and the community members should work with the school to provide children with the necessary MTE materials.
- Parents and community members should exert an effort in supporting the schools to promote MTE.

The recommendations are encapsulated into a recommended framework in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Recommended framework for the implementation of MTB MLE

Recommended Framework for the implementation MTB MLE			
	Task		Responsible \parties
1	Plan, coordinate and work with all concerned bodies in conducting well-structured and systematised awareness raising about the importance of MTB MLE at all levels, including teachers, parents and community members.	←	MoE and the Regional Education Bureau (REB)
2	Provide training including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reading and writing skills in the mother tongue</li> <li>• special pedagogical methods for suitable teaching of the mother tongue and in the mother tongue. This should be done for:</li> <li>• minority language teachers both in pre-service and in-service programmes</li> <li>• instructors at CTEs</li> </ul>	←	MoE, REB, CTEs , Wereda Education offices
3	Develop scientific terminologies in mother tongue and also to a CALP level so that children gain academic concepts of the lessons in mother tongue that could be transferred to another school languages in their later educational studies.	←	MoE and REB, Teacher educators
4	Supply children in schools with sufficient educational materials in the mother tongue to lay the foundation for a late-exit to a second language.	←	MoE, REBs, Parents and other relevant stakeholders
5	Develop a strategy document to guide teachers on how	←	MoE, REBs, CTE, NGOs .

	children transition from the mother-tongue medium of instruction to another medium of instruction. The document must be included in the teacher training modules.		
6	Frequent and adequate follow-ups of MTB MLE since mother tongue education is a new phenomenon in minority language areas.	←	MoE, REBs, Wereda Education offices, parents and relevant stakeholders.

## 6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study can be a means to conduct further research. With that in mind, the following recommendations are made.

- An investigation of better ways of teaching mother tongue not only for the purpose of concept formation but also to support the learning of other school languages.
- An investigation of strategies for bridging the transition from mother tongue to a second language medium of instruction.

## 6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Among the many factors involved in achieving quality education, language is considered to be the foundation of successful learning. Teaching and learning is facilitated when teachers and students have a common language which they both understand. At primary school, the common language in which children would properly communicate with their teachers is their mother tongue. It is a language in which they are able to understand and develop concepts embedded in every lesson. Children cannot learn if lessons are presented to them in a language they do not understand. The fact that teaching and learning involves speaking and listening in the early years of schooling followed by reading and writing, means that it is imperative to talk to children and let them speak in the classroom in a language they know best and use for communication. This is obviously their mother tongue.

Furthermore, children should begin learning from what they already know in their environment and vicinity. They should begin learning within their own context and culture. This can only be done when they learn in their mother tongue. However, the mother-tongue education programme should be well designed, appropriately planned and strategised with the stakeholders for successful implementation.

To that end, this study has identified the problems encountered in implementing the mother-tongue programme in two minority language areas in southern Ethiopia. It is envisaged that the findings and the recommendations will help both the central and the regional governments to develop effective strategies and guidelines for the successful implementation of mother tongue education in Ethiopia.

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## APPENDICES

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/06/14

Dear Mr Zeme,

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2017/06/14 to 2022/06/14

Ref#: 2017/06/14/57633657/17/MC

Name: Mr MD Zeme

Student#: 57633657

**Researcher:**

Name: Mr MD Zeme

Email: mesfin\_derash@sil.org

Telephone#: +251113480343

**Supervisor:**

Name: Prof A Hugo

Email: annajohugo@gmail.com

**Title of research:**

**Exploring the challenges of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in  
Primary Schools in Minority language areas in Ethiopia**

**Qualification:** PhD in Language Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/06/14 to 2022/06/14.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/06/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

**APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/06/14. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Note:**

*The reference number **2017/06/14/57633657/17/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**

**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**

mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**

**EXECUTIVE DEAN**

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

04 APRIL, 2017

UNISA-ET/KA/ST/29/04-04-17

BUREAU OF EDUCATION  
SNNPR  
HAWASSA

Dear Madam/Sir,

The University of South Africa (UNISA) extends warm greetings. By this letter, we want to confirm that Mr. Mesfin Derash Zeme (student Number: 57633657) is a PhD student in the department of Curriculum Studies at UNISA. Currently, he is on the stage of data collection on his PhD research entitled **"Exploring the challenges of mother tongue based multilingual education in primary schools in minority language areas in Ethiopia."**

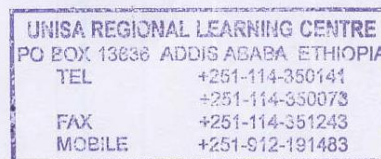
This is therefore to kindly request your assistance in supporting the student by giving him access to data sources. We thank you in advance for the support that would provide to the student.

Sincerely,



Tsige GebreMeskel Abera

Deputy Director – Academic and ICT Support



University of South Africa  
Regional Learning Center  
P.O. Box: 13836, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Telephone: +251 11 435 2244 / +251 11 435 0078  
Facsimile: +251 11 435 1242/ 43/ 44  
Mobile: +251 912 19 1483  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## APPENDIX B: LETTER FROM UNISA TO THE BUREAU OF EDUCATION



**APPENDIX C1: ENGLISH VERSION OF THE LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM REGIONAL EDUCATION BUREAU TO ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICE WHERE THE SAMPLE SITES ARE FOUND (TRANSLATED INTO AMHARIC)**

**From: Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State  
Education Bureau**

**To: Dawuro Zonal Education Department**

**Tercha**

**To: Kontta Special Werda (District )Education office**

**Ameya**

**Sub: Request for support and cooperation**

We have received a letter dated April 04//2017 under a reference number ET/KA/29/04/04/17 from UNISA regional office at Addis Ababa requesting permission for a PhD study in which the data collection will take place in your zone on a study entitled as **“Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia”** The name of the research student is Mesfin Derash Zeme, student number 57633657.

Therefore, we hereby would like your office to give all needed support and cooperation to the research student mentioned above by providing all the essential information and resources for his study.

Derese Gatisa Gamu

Deputy Bureau Head and Owner of Curriculum & Education

Mat/Sup/ Core Process


**CC**

Curriculum and edu/ Mat/ Sup/ core Process

Education Bureau.



**APPENDIX C2: AMHARIC VERSION OF THE LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM REGIONAL EDUCATION BUREAU TO ZONAL EDUCATION OFFICE WHERE THE**


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 Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State  
 Education Bureau

ቁጥር 203/ከፃፃ-1930/13/55  
 ቀን 4/8/09

“ፕራት ያለው ትምህርት ለሁሉም”  
 “ትምህርት ለሁሉም”

ለደውሮ ዞን ትምህርት መምሪያ  
 ተርጫ


ለኩንታ ልዩ ወረዳ ት/ት ጽ/ቤት  
 አመያ

**ጉዳዩ ድጋፍና ትብብር እንዲደረግ ስለመጠየቅ**

አቶ መስፍን ደራሽ ዘመን በዩኒቨርሲቲ ኦፍ ሳውዝ አፍሪካ (UNISA) “ Exploring the Challenges of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language areas in Ethiopia” በሚል ርእስ የደክተውን ዲግሪያቸውን እየሰሩ መሆናቸውን እና ትብብር እንዲደረግላቸው ከ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የኢትዮጵያ ሪፎርም አፈሰ በቁጥር ET/KA/ST/29/04/04/17 የተጻፈ ደብዳቤ ደርሶናል፡፡

በመሆኑም ግለሰቡ ለሚሰሩት የደክተውን ዲግሪ ጥናት የሚረዳቸውን መረጃዎች በመስጠትና አስፈላጊውን ትብብር ሁሉ በማድረግ እንድትተባበሩዋቸው እየጠየቅን ይህን የድጋፍ ደብዳቤ ሰጥተን ልክናቸዋል፡፡

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 ከሰላምታ ጋር  
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 Deputy Bureau Head & Owner,  
 Curriculum & Edu /Mat/Sul/  
 Core Process

እባክዎን ምላሽ ሲጻፉ የደብዳቤውን ቁጥር መጥቀስ አይርሱ  
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 ዘመን Hawassa

## **SAMPLE SITES ARE FOUND**

### **APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DAWURO ZONE SCHOOLS**



May 2017

Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Lanaguge Areas**

**Head of the Zonal Education Departement**

Tercha

Dear Sir/Madam

I am doing research under supervision of Anna Johanna Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). We are requesting your permission to allow a group of experts and department heads to participate in a study entitled “Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Lanaguge Areas”.

As you have already seen, I have obtained a letter of permission and support from the South Nations, Nationalities, Peoples Regional Education Bureau to your Special Wereda Education office.

The aim of the study is to identify the challenges that hinder children's Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary schools in general and in minority language areas in Ethiopia in particular. The study will entail face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with several stakeholders including officials and experts from Ministry of Education as well as instructors at colleges of education and mother-tongue teachers of 5 primary schools, 3 from your area and another two from Kontta special wereda schools are involved. Schools in your zone have been selected because the study focuses on minority language areas where mother-tongue-based multilingual education in primary schools is being offered. Thus, I believe that it will be the right sample area to get the correct information.

The purpose of the study is to explore the challenges regarding mother-tongue education policy implementation and recommend possible solutions. Each interview and focus group discussion will take approximately one hour. Firstly, I will conduct individual indepth interviews with the Director of Mother-Tongue Education and English Lanaguge Development Director and mother-tongue education experts at Ministry of Education particularly regarding mother-tongue education policy issues and its implementation.

Similarly, the interviews will continue with Curriculum Department experts in the Ministry of Education. Teachers who use mother tongue as the medium of instruction at primary school from 3 schools in your zone will be interviewed and heterogenous focus group discussions will be conducted with representatives of parents, the community, schoolteachers, the director and student representatives at the sample schools. The benefits of this study will contribute towards the implementation of mother-tongue-based multilingual education in minority lanaguage areas, especially on how the components and the models of mother-tongue-based multilingual education could be implemented in primary schools in minority lanaguage areas.

There are no risks anticipated in this study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. All participation in this study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from participation at any time. The information obtained during this study will remain confidential no name of an individual will be used; no name of a particular school will be mentioned. Pseudonyms will be used for names of all participants and schools. Hard copies and audio recordings of the answers will be stored by me for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at my office for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer.

Feedback will be in the form of a written report to the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureau and the zonal education office. I will complete and submit the research report and research summary template obtained from the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureau so as to inform the department about the findings and recommendations. I will disseminate the results at a meeting with all stakeholders (Ministry of Education relevant departments, mother-tongue education experts, curriculum experts, school participants and principals of the sample schools).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Mesfin Derash Zeme', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Mesfin Derash Zeme

## APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT KONTTA SPECIAL WEREDA EDUCATION OFFICE



May 2017

Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas**

**Head of the Zonal Education Departement**

Ameya

Dear Sir/Madam

I am doing research under supervision of Anna Johanna Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). We are requesting your permission to allow a group of experts and department heads to participate in a study entitled “Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Lanaguge Areas”.

As you have already seen, I have obtained a letter of permission and support from the South Nations, Nationalities, Peoples Regional Education Bureau to your Special Wereda Education office.

The aim of the study is to identify the challenges that hinder children's Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary schools in general and in minority language areas in Ethiopia in particular. The study will entail face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with several stakeholders including officials and experts from Ministry of Education as well as instructors at colleges of education and mother-tongue teachers of 5 primary schools, 3 from your area and another two from Kontta special wereda schools are involved. Schools in your zone have been selected because the study focuses on minority language areas where mother-tongue-based multilingual education in primary schools is being offered. Thus, I believe that it will be the right sample area to get the correct information.


The purpose of the study is to explore the challenges regarding mother-tongue education policy implementation and recommend possible solutions. Each interview and focus group discussion will take approximately one hour. Firstly, I will conduct individual indepth interviews with the Director of Mother-Tongue Education and English Lanaguge Development Director and mother-tongue education experts at Ministry of Education particularly regarding mother-tongue education policy issues and its implementation.

Similarly, the interviews will continue with Curriculum Department experts in the Ministry of Education. Teachers who use mother tongue as the medium of instruction at primary school from 3 schools in your zone will be interviewed and heterogenous focus group discussions will be conducted with representatives of parents, the community, schoolteachers, the director and student representatives at the sample schools. The benefits of this study will contribute towards the implementation of mother-tongue-based multilingual education in minority lanaguage areas, especially on how the components and the models of mother-tongue-based multilingual education could be implemented in primary schools in minority lanaguage areas.

There are no risks anticipated in this study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. All participation in this study is voluntary and participants can withdraw from participation at any time. The information obtained during this study will remain confidential no name of an individual will be used; no name of a particular school will be mentioned. Pseudonyms will be used for names of all participants and schools. Hard copies and audio recordings of the answers will be stored by me for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at my office for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer.

Feedback will be in the form of a written report to the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureau and the zonal education office. I will complete and submit the research report and research summary template obtained from the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureau so as to inform the department about the findings and recommendations. I will disseminate the results at a meeting with all stakeholders (Ministry of Education relevant departments, mother-tongue education experts, curriculum experts, school participants and principals of the sample schools).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Mesfin Derash Zeme', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Mesfin Derash Zeme





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Dereza Getisa Gamu  
የትምህርት ጋራ  
Deputy Bureau Head & Owner,  
Curriculum & Edu /Mat/Sui  
Core Process

## APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTORATE



Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia.**

### DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

The researcher's name is Mesfin Derash Zeme and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof AJ Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). I am requesting you to participate in a study entitled **"Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Areas in Ethiopia."**

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit to deeply look into the challenges of mother-tongue education implementation from various sources. The betterment of implementation of mother-tongue education will be of a paramount importance for children's further educational achievement

### WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you are a very important person who is directly involved with mother-tongue education policy and guidelines implementation. I know you have the knowledge and skills on how to support and lead the mother tongue policy implementation. I will also interview experts in the Directorate for English Language and Mother-tongue Education of the Ministry. I have planned to have focus group discussions with relevant department officials at Regional Education Bureau of Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. I will include mother-tongue teachers from 6 minority language area schools of SNNPRS as well as college instructors of mother tongue trainees in this study. Thus, the study will try to get comprehensive information from all directly involved stakeholders. To that end, your participation in this study is crucial.

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCHER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussion with various participants. I would like to kindly request your participation in individual interview. During the interview I will use unstructured open-ended questions and your responses will be recorded using a voice-recording device, and then immediately after the

interviews it will be transcribed. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of the study is to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in minority language areas so that children of the minority language areas will benefit from the proper use of mother-tongue education.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The interviews and the focus group discussions will be recorded using a voice-recording device and the researcher will also take written notes during the interview. These activities may cause inconvenience to the participants. However, I will explain the purpose of the research to participants and also outline the ethical values that govern the study. During the interview the researcher will not ask participants to say their names and they will be allocated pseudonyms in the written report. As a result no one will be able to link a pseudonym to a name or any responses to a participant's name. During the focus group discussions, the researcher will not include personal details of participants. No names will be used during the study and no one will know the names of any participants.

There is no anticipated risk and thus no steps will be taken for any harm or injury attributable to the study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHER'S IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym (Participant A to ----) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.



A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies and audio recordings of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's office, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, audio recordings will be permanently destroyed and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no form of compensation included in the study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mesfin Derash Zeme or email [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Annah Johanna Hugo on 082 7385299 or email [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely



Mesfin Derash Zeme



## **APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS TEACHING IN MOTHER TONGUE.**



May 2017

Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia.**

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

The researcher's name is Mesfin Derash Zeme and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof AJ Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). I am requesting you to participate in a study entitled **"Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Areas in Ethiopia"**.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit to deeply look into the challenges of mother-tongue education implementation from various sources. The betterment of implementation of mother-tongue education will be of a paramount importance for children's further educational achievement.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are a very important person who is directly involved with mother-tongue education policy and guidelines implementation. I know you have the knowledge and skills on how to support and lead the mother tongue policy implementation. I will also interview experts in the Directorate for English Language and Mother-tongue Education of the Ministry. I have planned to have focus group discussions with relevant department officials at Regional Education Bureau of Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. I will include mother-tongue teachers from 6 minority language area schools of SNNPRS as well as college instructors of mother tongue trainees in this study. Thus, the study will try to get comprehensive information from all directly involved stakeholders. To that end, your participation in this study is crucial.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCHER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussion with various participants. I would like to kindly request your participation in individual interview. During the interview I will use unstructured open-ended questions and your responses

will be recorded using a voice-recording device, and then immediately after the interviews it will be transcribed. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of the study is to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in minority language areas so that children of the minority language areas will benefit from the proper use of mother-tongue education.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The interviews and the focus group discussions will be recorded using a voice-recording device and the researcher will also take written notes during the interview. These activities may cause inconvenience to the participants. However, I will explain the purpose of the research to participants and also outline the ethical values that govern the study. During the interview the researcher will not ask participants to say their names and they will be allocated pseudonyms in the written report. As a result no one will be able to link a pseudonym to a name or any responses to a participant's name. During the focus group discussions, the researcher will not include personal details of participants. No names will be used during the study and no one will know the names of any participants.

There is no anticipated risk and thus no steps will be taken for any harm or injury attributable to the study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHER'S IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym (Participant A to ----) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies and audio recordings of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's office, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, audio recordings will be permanently destroyed and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no form of compensation included in the study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mesfin Derash Zeme or email [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Annah Johanna Hugo on 082 7385299 or email [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely.



Mesfin Derash Zeme

## **APPENDIX H: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: COLLEGE OF EDUCATION MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTORS**



May 2017

Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia.**

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

The researcher's name is Mesfin Derash Zeme and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof AJ Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). I am requesting you to participate in a study entitled **“Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Areas in Ethiopia”**.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit to deeply look into the challenges of mother-tongue education implementation from various sources. The betterment of implementation of mother-tongue education will be of a paramount importance for children's further educational achievement.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are a very important person who is directly involved with mother-tongue education policy and guidelines implementation. I know you have the knowledge and skills on how to support and lead the mother tongue policy implementation. I will also interview experts in the Directorate for English Language and Mother-tongue Education of the Ministry. I have planned to have focus group discussions with relevant department officials at Regional Education Bureau of Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. I will include mother-tongue teachers from 6 minority language area schools of SNNPRS as well as college instructors of mother tongue trainees in this study. Thus, the study will try to get comprehensive information from all directly involved stakeholders. To that end, your participation in this study is crucial.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCHER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussion with various participants. I would like to kindly request your participation in individual interview. During the interview I will use unstructured open-ended questions and your responses will be recorded using a voice-recording device, and then immediately after the

interviews it will be transcribed. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of the study is to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in minority language areas so that children of the minority language areas will benefit from the proper use of mother-tongue education.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The interviews and the focus group discussions will be recorded using a voice-recording device and the researcher will also take written notes during the interview. These activities may cause inconvenience to the participants. However, I will explain the purpose of the research to participants and also outline the ethical values that govern the study. During the interview the researcher will not ask participants to say their names and they will be allocated pseudonyms in the written report. As a result no one will be able to link a pseudonym to a name or any responses to a participant's name. During the focus group discussions, the researcher will not include personal details of participants. No names will be used during the study and no one will know the names of any participants.

There is no anticipated risk and thus no steps will be taken for any harm or injury attributable to the study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHER'S IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym (Participant A to ----) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies and audio recordings of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's office, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, audio recordings will be permanently destroyed and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no form of compensation included in the study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mesfin Derash Zeme or email [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Annah Johanna Hugo on 082 7385299 or email [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours Sincerely.



Mesfin Derash Zeme





## APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: PARENTS AND



11 April 2017

Title of the study: **Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia**

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

The researcher's name is Mesfin Derash Zeme and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof AJ Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). I am requesting you to participate in a study entitled **"Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Areas in Ethiopia"**.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit to deeply look into the challenges of mother-tongue education implementation from various sources. The betterment of implementation of mother-tongue education will be of a paramount importance for children's further educational achievement.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are a very important person who is directly involved with mother-tongue education policy and guidelines implementation. I know you have the knowledge and skills on how to support and lead the mother tongue policy implementation. I will also interview experts in the Directorate for English Language and Mother-tongue Education of the Ministry. I have planned to have focus group discussions with relevant department officials at Regional Education Bureau of Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. I will include mother-tongue teachers from 6 minority language area schools of SNNPRS as well as college instructors of mother tongue trainees in this study. Thus, the study will try to get comprehensive information from all directly involved stakeholders. To that end, your participation in this study is crucial.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCHER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussion with various participants. I would like to kindly request your participation in individual interview.

During the interview I will use unstructured open-ended questions and your responses will be recorded using a voice-recording device, and then immediately after the interviews it will be transcribed. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of the study is to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in minority language areas so that children of the minority language areas will benefit from the proper use of mother-tongue education.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The interviews and the focus group discussions will be recorded using a voice-recording device and the researcher will also take written notes during the interview. These activities may cause inconvenience to the participants. However, I will explain the purpose of the research to participants and also outline the ethical values that govern the study. During the interview the researcher will not ask participants to say their names and they will be allocated pseudonyms in the written report. As a result no one will be able to link a pseudonym to a name or any responses to a participant's name. During the focus group discussions, the researcher will not include personal details of participants. No names will be used during the study and no one will know the names of any participants.

There is no anticipated risk and thus no steps will be taken for any harm or injury attributable to the study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHER'S IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym (Participant A to ----) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to

people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies and audio recordings of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's office, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, audio recordings will be permanently destroyed and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no form of compensation included in the study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mesfin Derash Zeme or email [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Annah Johanna Hugo on 082 7385299 or email [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

(  )

Mesfin Derash Zeme

## **APPENDIX J: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: REGIONAL EDUCATION BUREAU**



11 April 2017

Title of the study: **Expolring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Language Areas in Ethiopia.**

### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

The researcher's name is Mesfin Derash Zeme and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof AJ Hugo, a professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. Her contact details are: [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com). I am requesting you to participate in a study entitled **"Exploring the Challenges of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Primary Schools in Minority Areas in Ethiopia"**.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to collect important information that could benefit to deeply look into the challenges of mother-tongue education implemntation form various sources. The betterment of implementation of mother-tongue education will be of a paramount importance for childern's further educational achievement.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because you are a very important person who is directly involved with mother-tongue education policy and guidelines implementation. I know you have the knowledge and skills on how to support and lead the mother tongue policy implementation. I will also interview experts in the Directorate for English Language and Mother-tongue Education of the Ministry. I have planned to have focus group discussions with relevant department officials at Regional Education Bureau of Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples' Regional State. I will include mother-tongue teachers from 6 minority language area schools of SNNPRS as well as college instructors of mother tongue trainees in this study. Thus, the study will tries to get comprehensive information from all directly involved stakeholders. To that end, your participation in this study is crucial.

### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE RESEARCHER'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves face-to- face interviews, and focus group discussion with various participants. I would like to kindly requests your participation in individual interview. During the interview I will use unstructured open-ended questions and your responses

will be recorded using a voice-recording device, and then immediately after the interviews it will be transcribed. The interviews will be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of the study is to contribute towards the improvement of the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in minority language areas so that children of the minority language areas will benefit from the proper use of mother-tongue education.

### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

The interviews and the focus group discussions will be recorded using a voice-recording device and the researcher will also take written notes during the interview. These activities may cause inconvenience to the participants. However, I will explain the purpose of the research to participants and also outline the ethical values that govern the study. During the interview the researcher will not ask participants to say their names and they will be allocated pseudonyms in the written report. As a result no one will be able to link a pseudonym to a name or any responses to a participant's name. During the focus group discussions, the researcher will not include personal details of participants. No names will be used during the study and no one will know the names of any participants.

There is no anticipated risk and thus no steps will be taken for any harm or injury attributable to the study.

### **WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND THE RESEARCHER'S IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a pseudonym (Participant A to ----) and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies and audio recordings of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher's office, for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After five years, hard copies will be shredded, audio recordings will be permanently destroyed and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

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### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education at Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mesfin Derash Zeme or email [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact [mesfin\\_derash@sil.org](mailto:mesfin_derash@sil.org) or [mesfinder@yahoo.com](mailto:mesfinder@yahoo.com)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Annah Johanna Hugo on 082 7385299 or email [annajohugo@gmail.com](mailto:annajohugo@gmail.com).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely



Mesfin Derash Zeme



## **APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COLLEGE MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTORS**

1. For how long have you been an instructor in the college?
2. What is your field of study?
3. How did you become mother tongue instructor?
4. What was the medium of instruction at your primary, secondary and tertiary level of education?
5. How did you acquaint yourself with the reading and writing of the mother-tongue education you are teaching now?
6. What is your understanding about the importance of mother tongue being used as medium of instruction at primary school?
7. How do you measure the mother tongue policy and its implementation?
8. What is the medium of instruction in your college?
9. What do you think is the perception of the community /parents regarding their children learning in mother tongue?
10. How would you measure the support and follow up provided by the government in the implementation of mother-tongue education in the minority language areas like yours?
11. What do you think should have been done different from the current situation in the implementation of mother tongue in minority language areas?
12. What general remark do you have regarding mother-tongue education in minority language areas?

## **APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS**

1. For how long have you been working in the Ministry?
2. How far are you acquainted with education and Training policy?
3. What is your opinion about children learning in their mother tongue?
4. How is the mother-tongue education programme being implemented according to the policy specifically in minority language areas?
5. How do parents and the community members view the importance of mother-tongue education?
6. To what extent has awareness raising about the importance of Mother-tongue education was provided to community members and parents in minority language areas?
7. What special and specific support has been offered to the minority language area whose language was recently given the status of being used as school language?
8. What kind of guideline or strategy document is there to help proper implementation of the programme?
9. Do you think the two languages spoken in the areas are suitable to be used as school languages?
10. What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using mother tongue?
11. Do you think the mother-tongue education policy is well implemented?
12. How would you evaluate the teachers training in teaching mother tongue and in mother tongue in minority language areas?
13. What is the status of mother tongue materials development and provision in minority language areas?
14. What are the challenges faced in implementing Mother-tongue education in general?

## **APPENDIX M: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHERS**

1. For how long have you taught mother tongue?
2. What is your level of education?
3. What do you feel about children's learning in mother tongue?
4. What do you think is the feeling of the community about their children learning in mother tongue?
5. How did you become mother tongue teacher?
6. Are you trained to teach mother tongue or other subjects in mother tongue?
7. How suitable is the language spoken in your area to be used as a language of instruction?
8. How would teaching in mother tongue and teaching mother tongue as a subject has helped children to learn other school languages such as English and Amharic?"
9. What do you think are the other problems regarding orthography and related issues and what should be the solutions?'
10. What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using the mother tongue?"
11. Who prepares the books in mother tongue and where are they prepared?
12. How do you measure the quality of the books?
13. What kind of guideline or strategy document is there to help proper implementation of the programme?
14. How do you evaluate the follow up and support provided from the government?"  
What kind of follow up and support is being offered to strengthen the mother-tongue education program?
15. Do you think the mother-tongue education policy is well implemented?
16. What are the challenges faced in implementing mother-tongue education in your area?

## **APPENDIX N: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What do you feel about children learning in mother tongue?
2. How do parents and the community members at large view the importance of mother-tongue education?
3. What do you think is the importance of mother-tongue education?
4. Do you like children learning in mother tongue?
5. What problems are faced in implementing mother-tongue education in your area?
6. How do you measure the support by the government at various levels?
7. What is your view regarding mother tongue teaching and learning materials provision?
8. What general opinion do you have with implementation of mother-tongue education.

Note: after each question, there were many probing questions and discussions with the FGD members.

## **APPENDIX O: SAMPLES OF THE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH NUMBERED AS APPENDIX 01, 02 AND 03**

### **APPENDIX 01: SAMPLE TRANSLATED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FROM AMHARIC: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS**

Researcher(R): Thank so much for accepting the researcher's request to take part in this study. As indicated in the consent paper you signed, I am doing a PhD study on the implementation of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual education in primary schools in minority language areas in Southern Ethiopia

R: Your name please

R: How old are you?

MEP-1 = I am 47 years old

R: Your qualification Please

MEP-1= I have MA degree in educational planning and Administration

R: For how long have you been working in the Ministry?

MEP-1. Well, if you ask me the whole service years including the researcher's teaching job it is more than 25 but here in the Ministry of Education, I served in various level for the last 9 years.

R: How far are you acquainted with education and Training policy?

MEP-1. I know the education and training policy very well as we are used to frequently developing different guidelines and directives based on the policy framework since the policy is in place.

R: What is your opinion about children learning in their mother tongue?

MEP-1: I would say that the policy is a progressive one in letting children learn in their own language. Obviously, children are better taught in the language they know so as to develop concepts without being exposed to any kind of language barrier as a challenge for their learning. In this regard the education and training policy has played a great role. However, there is a big problem regarding its implementation. Yes, of course, the policy explains the need to make the necessary preparation before implementing it but not all needed preparations were accordingly carried out. For example, we need to have changed the attitude of the community through continuous awareness raising before we let their children learn in their mother tongue

R: How is the mother-tongue education programme being implemented according to the policy specifically in minority language areas?

MEP-1: This is a very challenging question. It will be wrong if I say the policy is being implemented correctly. There are various drawbacks including teachers training and getting the language ready for education. In fact, the mandate about primary school teaching and learning process and the supply and distribution of materials goes mainly to regional education bureaus though the Ministry is also responsible to maintain a standard and balance. The policy deals with making necessary preparation before embarking on implementation but it has not been done accordingly. The Ministry in collaboration with regions is trying its best to provide children with adequate number of books though we still have a lot to do. Yes, as you said there can be more scarcity of books in minority language areas as compared to others of course but this is a problem that the regional education should deal with to be frank.

R: How do parents and the community members view the importance of mother-tongue education?

MEP-1. I think the community at all levels are happy that their language has been given this status of being written language. As you know all minority languages were used only as oral language. That has created a sense of discrimination. But now things are changed. However, I am not sure if the community understood why mother-tongue education is important. I suggest we still need to teach and give them proper awareness."

R: To what extent has awareness raising about the importance of Mother-tongue education was provided to community members and parents in minority language areas?

MEP-1. Well, as I already said the mandate regarding mother-tongue education at primary level goes to the regional education bureaus though directives and guidance are developed centrally at the Ministry of Education level. As far as I am concerned, I don't think sufficient awareness raising is provided to minority language areas who would need to have been offered more than anywhere else. This is why some community members are sceptical about their children's learning in mother tongue. Thus, it still calls for more and more awareness raising events to happen so that the parents would also support their children education.

R: What special and specific support has been offered to the minority language area whose language was recently given the status of being used as school language?

MEP-1. "I repeat the mother tongue curriculum issue is the mandate of the region. The Ministry needs to develop strategies and set standards to maintain a balance between regions. There are not enough materials; there are no supplementary reading materials, dictionaries etc. specifically for minority language areas as far as the reports we receive from regions is concerned Only the seven bigger languages that are selected by USAID and MoE have some opportunities of getting these materials relatively better than others though we are trying our best through a World Bank fund under a programme called GEQIP. Short term Teachers training is also offered only to the seven selected languages"

R: What kind of guideline or strategy document is there to help proper implementation of the programme?

MEP-1. "In fact, there are guidelines in general that serves as a guidance of mother-tongue education but there are no guidelines specific to minority language areas. At this level also the expectation is that the regional education bureaus prepare the guideline that fits their regional context. However, I don't think they have it so far."

R: Do you think the two languages spoken in the areas are suitable to be used as school languages?

MEP 1: "I would say no. This question will lead us to think of the teachers' abilities because teachers are the main persons in the teaching and learning scenario. The teachers of these languages themselves have not been trained in these languages ... I mean they don't know the orthography. They don't read and write correctly. This is not because they are weak, but the language was not ready to be used in schools and colleges some years ago. It is a new phenomenon and it lacks the necessary conditions to be used in schools. It should have been well developed before being used in schools both as Mol and as a subject."

R: What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using mother tongue?

MEP-1: There are various challenges including lack of adequate training offered to mother-tongue teachers, provision of sufficient mother tongue materials and lack of support from the government at regional and zonal level.

R: Do you think the mother-tongue education policy is well implemented?

MEP-1: "No, there is a big gap in this regard and the minority languages have not been given due attention. The quality of books has not been tested and materials are scarce, teachers' training is not well organised and there are many drawbacks."

R: How would you evaluate the teachers training in teaching mother tongue and in mother tongue in minority language areas?

MEP-1: There is lack of adequately trained teachers not only in minority language areas but also in other language areas also. Several of the College of Teacher Education have not been well prepared to give training for the primary school trainee teachers in their mother tongue. On the other hand, such areas of minority languages that you have targeted have not established CTEs at all. So, I would say Mother-tongue teachers training is inadequate and needs a lot of work.

R: What is the status of mother tongue materials development and provision in minority language areas?

MEP-1. "I don't think mother tongue materials are provided adequately. There are shortages in many areas as far as reports we receive indicate. I think the regional

education bureaus and MOE needs to take this issue into serious consideration though a lot is being done.

R: What are the challenges faced in implementing Mother-tongue education in general?

“Well, I suggest that there should be a well-structured plan of implementation. We need to be prepared with all the inputs for the children’s learning. Materials must be designed according to the cultural and environmental aspects of the areas of the minority languages. Teachers should be well trained before being assigned as mother-tongue teachers in schools. MTE strategy and language policy are highly needed. Equally like other inputs, the need to teach the community about the importance of MTB MLE should be given priority. But we have not done all these. It is like the proverb ‘putting the cart before the horse’.”



## **APPENDIX O2: SAMPLE TRANSLATED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FROM AMHARIC: TEACHERS**

Researcher (R): Thank so much for accepting the researcher's request to take part in this study. As indicated in the consent paper you signed, I am doing a PhD study on the challenges of Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education in primary schools in minority language areas in Southern Ethiopia.

Researcher (R): For how long have you taught mother tongue?

KOT-1: I have been a teacher for the last 13 years.

R: What is your level of education?

KOT-1: I have a diploma in teaching science with a focus area in mathematics. I am also doing a BSC degree in summer education program at Dilla University.

R: What do you feel about children's learning in mother tongue?

KOT: Well, I feel that mother-tongue education is important for children's learning. I have seen that children easily learning all subjects when they are taught in their own language. I remember that when I was in primary and secondary school, I had a problem and suffered a lot in understanding the content of all subjects when taught in English and /or Amharic language. However, these days children relax in learning in their own language. So, I understand that children's learning is mother tongue is important. More than everything, it eases the communication between the teacher and the children.

R: What do you think is the feeling of the community about their children learning in mother tongue?

KOT-1: The perception of community members and parents has changed nowadays in such a way that they are favouring MTE mainly because their children are improving in achieving better grades than the previous times in which children were struggling a lot to pass examinations. However, they still insist that their children should be able to make use of English as well as Amharic. On top of this, the community are happy that their language has been given respect in such a way that it is becoming a written language. In fact, several community members have a feeling that unless their children know English very well, they will not be able to get jobs in the future.

R: How did you become mother tongue teacher?

KOT-1: I am from this community the language is the researcher's mother tongue. So, I was assigned to teach mathematics in mother tongue in grade 3. As the policy states, in grade three all subjects are given in mother tongue.

R: Are you trained to teach mother tongue or other subjects in mother tongue?

KOT-1: No, I was not trained in mother tongue, I was trained in English. However, Kontta language was given as a single course while I was in the college of teacher education. Though not in depth, I had an opportunity to be introduced to the orthography of the language somehow. Later on, I tried myself to learn more of the writing and reading in the language.

R: How suitable is the language spoken in your area to be used as a language of instruction?

KOT-1: I think there are lots of things to work on. As a mathematics teacher, I have struggled to explain number of terminologies into the language though there are words that are said to be equivalent to the concept of a certain content.

R: How would teaching in mother tongue and teaching mother tongue as a subject has helped children to learn other school languages such as English and Amharic?"

KOT-1. I am not sure if it really helped them. I don't see much improvement from the children's side regarding better achievement in English or Amharic. I rather observe teachers and parents complaining about low achievement of children in English.

R: What do you think are the other problems regarding orthography and related issues and what should be the solutions?'

KOT-1. Well, as it is known the Orthography was developed recently as compared to other majority languages that were used as written languages for centuries. Thus, I think the orthography needs improvement over time. Teachers should also be given special training as how they should perfectly make use of the orthography with struggling to read and write.

R: What is the major problem and challenge regarding the support in teaching and learning using the mother tongue?"

KOT-1: ehhe ... there are number of challenges. As I said earlier the teachers training should be given more focus as the orthography is new. Materials provision is not adequate. I don't even see much support provided to this special program.

R. Who prepares the books in mother tongue and where are they prepared?

KOT-1: I think books are prepared by zone education department leadership. They select writers and contract them to write the books with them. The books prepared at zonal level will be brought to the attention of Regional education bureau for approval and printing.

R. How do you measure the quality of the books?

KOT-1: Well... eheh, I would say they need improvement since some of the writers are also new to the orthography the books have some orthography problem including spelling errors not curriculum experts as such, they don't consider the elements of curriculum

R: What kind of guideline or strategy document is there to help proper implementation of the programme?

KOT-1: ... I am not sure, but I don't think there is one. I have never heard people talking about guidelines and strategy documents so far.

R: How do you evaluate the follow up and support provided from the government?" What kind of follow up and support is being offered to strengthen the mother-tongue education program?

KOT-1. ... I have already said that there is as good support as expected. A lot could have been done to support and make it successful. In fact, the opportunity given to us mother tongue by itself is a big support.

R: Do you think the mother-tongue education policy is well implemented?

KOT-1: No, I don't think so. There are lots of things remaining, teachers training, adequate materials support etc.

Researcher: Thank you very much for giving me your time and explaining everything clearly.

### **APPENDIX 03: SAMPLE TRANSLATED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT OF COLLEGE OF TEACHER EDUCATION LECTURERS**

Researcher(R): Thank so much for accepting the researcher's request to take part in this research study. As indicated in the consent paper you signed, I am doing a PhD study on the implementation of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education in primary schools in minority language areas in Southern Ethiopia

#### **Interview questions for College Mother Tongue Instructors.**

R: For how long have you been an instructor in the college?

CTP:2. I have been serving for the last 10 years now.

R: What is your field of study?

CTP:2. I studied English Language at a Master's degree level. I have MA in TEFL from Dilla University.

R: How did you become mother tongue instructor?

CTP: 2. Well... ehe ... I was asked to teach the Dawuro language by the College administrators since I am a native speaker of the language though I did not study the language at that level.

R: What was the medium of instruction at your primary, secondary and tertiary level of education?

CTP: 2 Unfortunately, I completed high school before our language is introduced to be school language. So, at all levels the medium of instruction at lower level was Amharic and after grade 6 it was English. In the university the medium of instruction is English as a whole. For me, the Dawuro language being used as school language for me was new at the beginning.

R: How did you acquaint yourself with the reading and writing of the mother tongue education you are teaching now?

CTP-2: As I said, the researcher's language was not school language at any of the level of education. I completed high school before our language is introduced to be school language. So, I had to struggle to learn the orthography myself since I should read and write in the researcher's language though I was not even aware of the importance of mother tongue education in the beginning. Currently, I feel that I am perfectly using it in both reading writing.

R: What do you think is the perception of the community /parents regarding their children learning in mother tongue?

CTP-2: Okay! The perception of the majority of the community shows misunderstanding in such a way that many parents feel letting their children learn in the language they

speak at home is not important. They would like their children to learn in English or in Amharic. However, they also favour their language for being used as school language as it is a prestige for them ”

R: What is your understanding about the importance of mother tongue being used as medium of instruction at primary school?

CTP-2: Well, when it was first announced I was not aware of the importance and I was skeptical about its advantage. However later on, I understood about its importance and began teaching myself the orthography. Currently, I am aware that mother tongue education has magnificent importance in supporting children education as a whole

R: How suitable is the language spoken in your area to be used as a language of instruction?

CTP- 2: I cannot say the Dawuro or the Kontta language at this stage have reached adequate level of academic language. However, it is good that we have started using them as school languages since the adequate level comes over time.”

R: What is the medium of instruction in your college?

CTP-2: All courses are taught in English. So, the medium of instruction in all college of teachers’ education is English. Of course, a single course as a subject is offered for the respective mother tongue. Dawuro language is taught as a single subject for those trainee teachers who will be assigned in Dawuro primary schools.

R: How would you measure the support and follow up provided by the government in the implementation of mother tongue education in the minority language areas like yours ?

CTP-2: The support is very discouraging. I would say no adequate support is provided. We are so sad that neither the college nor any other responsible stakeholders are giving support particularly to mother tongue education. None of the college community gives attention to mother tongue education at all.

## **APPENDIX P: TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT**

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Similarity Index

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## APPENDIX Q: DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING



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Tel: 031 916 1420

Fax: 086 627 7756 Email: [jaybee@telkomsa.net](mailto:jaybee@telkomsa.net)

Website: [www.jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting](http://www.jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting)

19 April 2020

#### Declaration of professional edit

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SELECTED  
MINORITY LANGUAGE AREAS IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

by

Mesfin Derash Zeme

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I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

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